GOD THE GREATEST POET
MAN HIS GREATEST POEM

BRUCE S. WRIGHT

Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MOMENTS OF DEVOTION

God the Greatest Poet
Man His Greatest Poem

By
BRUCE S. WRIGHT

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PREFACE

One thought binds together all these pages: it is the thought that life is rhythmic, it is a poem. The basis for this assumption is found first of all in life itself. There is no machine, however delicately contrived or intricate in its workings, that can compare with the body. Even more rhythmic are the workings of the soul and mind of man in their relation to God the Father. Proof of this contention is found also in the Bible. Through all these pages the Bible is abundantly called upon to witness to the truth of the poetry of life.

The background for the faith herein expressed is found in a busy, happy life lived at different and fairly well-extended periods in a quiet village, a teeming city, and a foreign land. I am grateful for this varied experience.

For the use of certain quotations I am indebted to the following, and I hereby gratefully acknowledge their courtesy:

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BRUCE S. WRIGHT.

I

GOD'S POEMS

His Workmanship

We are his workmanship.—Ephesians 2. 10.

The word "workmanship" is a good word, but there is a better—it is the word "poem." "Poem" was the word originally used. To the Greek a poem was anything that was made—a house, a temple, a bridge—but gradually it came to mean truth expressed in rhythmical form. The meaning still stands and is pertinent to-day. We may correctly state it thus: We are God's poems. Creation is a poem. The stars are poems of the sky. Each star in his place sings the praise of his Creator, for

> "The heavens declare the glory of God;
> And the firmament showeth his handiwork."

The sea is a poem—speaking a various language, now thundering with a mighty voice, now with soft, low whispers of peace and calm. A river is a poem—from its source among the springs of the mountain, along all the way that it flows, winding, twisting, dashing down rocky cataracts or moving placidly through calm and peaceful fields, ministering

to tiny hamlets or serving great cities, on and on until it finds its home in the wide ocean, a river is a poem. Flowers are poems. A chrysanthemum is Kiplingesque; a rose is Tennysonian; a lily has the Browning stamp, while the common field daisy is Riley-like. But all are God's poems, in color, fragrance, texture, and form. The church is a poem. We speak of "the holy catholic church," and sometimes we stumble over the name "catholic," thinking of it as a denominational name, just as if one were to say "the Holy Baptist Church," or "the Holy Presbyterian Church." But the word "catholic" is not a denominational name; it means universal, all-inclusive. When we speak of a man being "catholic-minded" we mean that he has a broad, world-embracing mind. The "holy catholic church" is the true Church of God, in all her branches, "whate'er the name or sign." And that church is a poem, of varied tongues, of many minds, but a poem none the less. Children are God's poems, noisy, unrhythmical at times, but poems just the same. Longfellow thought of children as poems when he wrote:

"Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

"For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

"Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead."

We are all God's poems. Speaking merely from the physical standpoint the human body is a poem. Perfectly articulated, every part joined with every other part, working as units yet working all together; all controlled from the central seat of authority—the mind and will. A steeplejack is to climb to the top of our tall spire this week, to do some slight repair work one hundred and seventy-five feet above the ground. Only a man whose physical powers are as a poem can do a thing like that. A machine cannot do it; but a man's body, working as a poem, controlled and guided by the will, can. We are God's poems, physically, mentally, spiritually.

In the first place *a poem is built.* As a structure is built, piece by piece, stone upon stone, so is a poem. A true poet takes thoughts and words and builds them according to a plan. He works upon those thoughts and words as a builder works with his materials of brick, mor-

tar, stone, and wood. No great and enduring structure was ever put up in a night—Aladdin is not a builder but a dreamer—enduring structures are years in building. An auditorium may be put up in a few weeks, but it takes generations to build a cathedral. I doubt if any immortal poem was ever dashed off in a passing mood. I have read of poets who have said of occasional great productions: "That! Oh, that came to me all of a sudden and I wrote it down hurriedly." The inspiring thought and idea may have come suddenly, but after he wrote down the first lines he polished them, reshaped them, placed his words with the greatest care as a mason places stones in an arch. Life is like that. A great and enduring life is not built hurriedly. It takes years; it takes all sorts of experiences. It is these experiences of joy and sorrow, hope and despair, success and failure, tears and laughter, the little annoying as well as gratifying experiences of every day, which make up the thoughts and words of the poem God would make of us. Let God build your life into a poem!

In the second place a poem is *rhythmical.* There are several forms of poetry—lyric, the sonnet, the ode, hymns and songs, elegies, narrative poetry—but all true poetry has rhythm.

It swings along, sometimes of its own power. Whitcomb Riley's poetry is like that; it has a rhythm that carries one with it; his poems sing themselves. Rhythm! I can illustrate this matter of rhythm by an old and familiar story (after all, the old familiar incidents are the best). Well, the incidents of the one I am thinking of took place a long, long time ago. There was a city closed to the rightful possessors. God said to the leader of the people who should have been inside the city but were kept outside: "Do as I tell you. Take the ark of the covenant and place it here in the center; let seven priests with seven trumpets of ram's horns go ahead of the ark; let the men who are armed go first, ahead of the priests; then let all the rest of the people follow the ark. March about the city wall, once, then return to camp. Do this the second day, and the third, each day until the seventh. On the seventh day march about the walls seven times; the seventh time around let the priests blow upon the trumpets and let all the people shout with a loud voice." Joshua and the people did as they were told, and on the seventh day, the seventh time around the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted with a loud shout and the walls of Jericho fell down flat, and the people went in and

took the city which rightly belonged to them. The whole proceeding, planned and executed, was rhythmical. I know how hard it is to keep the rhythm of life. You settle down to do a piece of work, you are no more than started when the phone rings and you are interrupted; you answer the phone, then return to your task; you get only fairly started again when the door bell calls you; you answer the doorbell, dispose of that item, again turn to your work. Once more you are fairly well started on an important bit of work when you are called to the back door by the grocer, the butcher, or baker; you attend to that summons when once again the back door summons you—it is a neighbor's child wanting your child to come out and play. So it goes—the rhythm of your work, the rhythm of your day is broken again and again. It is not an easy matter to maintain the rhythm of things—to assemble our forces, armed men, priests with trumpets, ark of the covenant, people, and march about the wall, once each day, and seven times the seventh day. But I wonder, after all, if this is not the supreme conquest—to maintain the rhythm of life in the face of all interruptions, to take up the task, to continue the march from every point of interruption. To refuse to complain, or find fault,

or whine, or excuse oneself—for when one begins to explain and excuse himself that is a confession of weakness. Rather let us say: "Lord, I am thy poem, and with thy help I will keep the rhythm. When drawn aside, when interrupted, I will come back to it every time."

Again, a *poem is musical.* Many poems are set to music. A hymn book is a collection of poems to be sung. We are poems set to music. We are hymns to be sung. Does God *like* to sing me? *Can* God sing me? Right here is the difficulty, our poetry is not always such as God can use. R. C. Hutchison, a teacher in a Christian school in a Moslem land, writes in a current monthly on the subject of "Islam and Christianity." For thirteen hundred years Christianity has been face to face with Mohammedanism, yet the Moslem world stands to-day practically as it has stood all these centuries—a solid granite wall. What is the reason? By every honest study of the case Christianity emerges superior in every way. "Either Christ has failed, or we have failed Christ," says Hutchison. If the first is true, then we must surrender our faith. But the first is not true; Christ is still the risen, triumphant Christ. We, then, are forced to accept the second conclusion—we have failed

Christ. That drives us to self-examination, confession, and our knees—we have failed Christ. What is the distinctive element of Christianity? It is love. We preach love, but we practice the sword; we talk love, but we act hate; we sing love, but we are divided and torn asunder. We are not in any great and imposing manner, either as Christian nations or Christian denominations, giving a potent and unforgetable example of the distinguishing mark of our faith—which is love. We say we are a Christian nation. Is our nation such a poem that God can sing it? We glory in our church? Is our church such a poem that God can sing it? We are followers of the blessed Saviour, the Master of love. Are we such poems that God can use in song?

A poem is meant *to kindle the imagination.* I think I can illustrate this by a well-remembered old poem. It is James Russell Lowell's poem, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," those familiar lines—

> "And what is so rare as a day in June?
> Then, if ever, come perfect days;
> Then heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
> And over it softly her warm ear lays."

At once the imagination is kindled and the warmth and fragrance of summer burst upon us. Within a stone's throw of Grant's Tomb

on Riverside Drive, in New York city, and within a few blocks of some of the greatest educational institutions in the United States, stands a remarkable building, known as the "International House," a dormitory and club house for foreign students attending the schools of higher learning in New York. It has five hundred and twenty-five residents and four hundred outside members; sixty-six different nationalities are represented in the building, and every night conferences of some sort are in process, while Sunday is given over to a variety of religious services. It was the group of Japanese students in this International House who after the passing of the Exclusion act raised fifteen hundred dollars to send an American student to Japan. How this International House kindles the imagination! I would call it one of God's poems. If the representatives of sixty-six different nationalities can live together in friendly peace and accord under one roof, can we not make the whole world an International House! As God's poems, do we kindle the imagination of men, firing their enthusiasm, or do we have a dampening, deadening effect upon their yearnings?

A poem, finally, *has a theme.* Through every real poem "one increasing purpose runs."

Every true poem has, in other words, a soul. I was interested to hear a well-known American-Italian tenor say one evening that he never sang a selection until he found out the soul of the number. For that reason he refrained from singing Negro spirituals until he had spent considerable time in the South living among the Negroes, listening to them sing. So to-day he sings "Steal Away" as he heard it sung at a Negro revival; and he sings "Goin' Home" as he heard it sung at the dying bed of an aged Negro in a Negro's cabin. We are God's poem. What is the soul of our Poem? Christ is the soul of our life poem.

> "Christ's life our code, his cross our creed,
> Our common, glad confession be;
> Our deepest wants, our highest aims,
> Find their fulfillment, Lord, in thee."

You may not be able to *write* a poem, but you can *be* a poem. You *are* a poem, whether or no. Are you one of God's poems?

II

THE TREND OF THE POEM

Hopeful Tendencies in Present Day Religion

Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.—*John* 6.68.

Here, in one breath, are a question and an answer. Also, the same person who asks the question answers it. Is that a good sign? I should say unqualifiedly, Yes. He must be very certain of his answer or he would not venture it.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Have you ever followed this out to some of its conclusions? If Christ is not the purest soul that ever lived, where is that soul? If Christ is not the embodiment of mercy, justice, truth, where shall we look for the personification of these eternal qualities? If Christ is not the Son of God, who, then, may wear, unchallenged, that noblest title? If Christ is not the Saviour of the world, who is? If, in the great hours of human experience—and we all must pass through such hours—we cannot turn to Christ, to whom can we turn? O Peter, of old, you

have beautifully put into language our thought; you have said exactly what we would like to say, only you have said it so much better; you have lighted the first century with the wisdom of all the centuries—for the twentieth century could not speak more wisely than you have spoken—"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Viewing this whole matter dispassionately, we are ready to make the sentiment of Richard Watson Gilder our sentiment too. For it was Richard Watson Gilder who imagined himself back in Galilee 32 A. D., a non-Christian sojourning there, and this was his song:

"If Jesus Christ is a man—
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him;
And to him will I cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is a God—
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, the air."

Now, this dialogue between Jesus and Peter—rather, this monologue, for it is Peter only who speaks—suggests a thought to which may be attached the title—Some Hopeful Tendencies in Present-Day Religion. There are five.

The first is a tendency away from Ecclesiasticism toward Simplicity. A recent number of

a leading religious weekly, representing one of our great denominations, contained a news item of the number of persons confirmed in that church in Colorado, remarking how many of them were previously members of other denominations. For example, the figures included sixty-four Methodists, thirty-six Presbyterians, twenty-three Roman Catholics, nineteen Lutherans, eighteen from the Congregationalists, twelve from the Baptists and so on. Such boasts are puerile indeed. In these days nearly any large church in any city or town includes in its membership a considerable number who have been previously members of other denominations. What does it prove? It proves nothing except that people are not bound by ecclesiasticism. The ecclesiastical conceits of any body—Catholic or Protestant—have little influence. The people seek simplicity. In no one instance is this more evident than in the missionary endeavors of our great Protestant denominations. They are resolutely setting their faces against granting aid to rural churches which are merely competing churches. The tendency away from ecclesiasticism is not a movement to abolish denominational names and organizations; rather it is to purify names and simplify organizations. It is not a move-

ment to dampen our enthusiasm and fritter our loyalty; rather, it is to direct our enthusiasm and focus our loyalty.

There is another hopeful tendency in present-day religion, namely, *a trend from Rhapsody to Reality.* There is an intense hunger for reality in the world to-day. It is evident everywhere, even in the movies. You look upon a movie that is unreal, that is not true to life, and while you may watch the picture through to the end it does not impress you, and you come away with a certain feeling of resentment that life has been falsely interpreted. Nowhere is this intense hunger for reality more evident than in religion. Not that we would strike out all emotionalism, banish the decorations and silence the rhapsodies—not at all, but they must not obstruct; rather, they must be as doors that shall lead us into the presence of reality. What is reality? Here is a boy at his desk, his pad before him, his pencil in his hand. He writes 2+2=4. The 2 and the 2 which he has written on the pad do not make the 4 which he has written on the pad. The 2 and the 2 which make 4 are in his head. The 2 and the 2 and the 4 are only symbols, the reality is invisible. Similarly we strive for reality in religion. Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are replete with in-

structions about the building of the tabernacle, its place in the camp, its place in the life of the people. What was the tabernacle? It was the symbol of the presence of God. It was not that presence—it only typified that presence. We erect beautiful churches, we glory in our temples of worship, our present-day tabernacles. What are they? They are but symbols of reality. The real presence of God is not in the structure but in the soul of the worshiper. In our urgent quest for reality we would not tear down the structure; we would restate its purpose—symbol of the Divine Presence; we would reconsecrate its walls; we would pass through rhapsody to reality in a constantly renewed dedication—

"Come, O thou God of grace,
Dwell in this holy place;
E'en now descend.
This temple, reared to thee,
O may it ever be
Filled with thy majesty,
Till time shall end."

A third hopeful tendency is the tendency from *Doctrine to Experience.* One day I made a special trip to the vicinity of Saint Paul's in London. On this particular day I passed by Saint Paul's, around the curve of the street, to Aldersgate. And up along Aldersgate two or three blocks from the great cathedral is a

little park, a tiny breathing space tucked away hard by the busy thoroughfare. On the iron railing that separates the breathing space from the pavement is a tablet which tells the passerby that it was on this ground, on Wednesday evening, May 24, 1738, John Wesley attended a meeting of a few earnest souls, and while there, during the reading of the Scriptures, as he states in his own language: "I felt my heart strangely warmed within me. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now felt in my heart." That experience was the beginning of John Wesley's power. From that hour he was to be reckoned with in the moral life of England and of the world. He did not discard what he had learned at Oxford; he, one of Oxford's most gifted sons, intellectually, had that intellect fired by experience. Now, we cannot all have the same experience. That is a mistake we make. We try to make molds for religious experience and say, "You must feel just this way, and if you feel as I felt you

will be saved." Experiences are as varied as personalities. And, like your personality, your experience must be your very own. Do not try to duplicate the experience of John Wesley, or John Bunyan, or Jerry McAuley, or S. H. Hadley—trust your own experience. If God has spoken to you at all, at any time, in any manner, trust that experience, build upon it, be guided by it. This is one blessed thing about experience, it is an ineffaceable landmark in the past, a sure promise for the future. Having had an experience we can say with John Henry Newman,

> "So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
> Will lead me on
> O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
> The night is gone."

Let me name another hopeful tendency, a *tendency from Theorizing on Life to Living Life.* There is little sympathy these days with cloistered religion. The outstanding mark of Francis of Assisi was that he lived life, he practiced his gospel. He did not theorize about the Sermon on the Mount; he practiced it. When he read there the instruction, "Cleanse the lepers, heal the sick, cast out devils," he started out to do those very things. I have a friend who is going into a specialized form of salesmanship. He feels that he is

equipped, by training and natural gifts, for such work. No doubt he is right. But if he is going to be a great success as a salesman, he cannot sit in his office theorizing about selling, how many orders he would write if conditions were so and so. No, he must get out into the daily battle and grind of salesmanship and sell his goods. A few weeks ago forty-three men were entombed by a mine explosion. There was every reason to believe that the forty-three men were alive, and that they could survive a number of days, although there were hundreds of feet of debris and twisted iron and broken timber between them and liberty. What did the engineers and fellow miners do? Did they stand about the mouth of the wrecked mine and theorize? "Now how had we better proceed? Don't you think this would be the best way? No, don't do it that way; here, let me show you!" Not a bit of that. They plunged into the work, hour after hour, frantically, working their backs lame and their hands sore—working, digging, toiling, until success crowned their labors; their fellow miners were freed. The one phase of life that offers a greater temptation to theorizing than any other is the religious phase. The way of least resistance is the sanctuary theory of religion. We need living contacts.

The fifth hopeful tendency of present-day religion is *the tendency from Speculations about God to God himself.* The psalmist has given voice to the yearning of every generation and of every soul in his penetrating phrases:

"*When thou saidst,* Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee
Thy face, Lord, will I seek.
Hide not thy face far from me."

Oh, that is the yearning of the human soul—not speculation about God, but God himself. Since the Hallelujah Chorus was first heard in 1743 every audience in England and elsewhere has arisen to its feet and remained standing during its rendition. Tradition has it that when the strains of this overwhelming outpouring of praise first struck the ear of King George II he arose up in his emotion and remained standing to its end, and perforce the audience arose with him, and this reverent and becoming attitude has been the custom now for nearly two hundred years. What is the reason for this? Why, the Hallelujah Chorus brings us into the very presence of God, and in our eager quest we stand up; that is what hungry, groping humanity yearns for—the overwhelming sense of the presence of God.

One more thing must be noted—the final hopeful tendency of present-day religion is

toward Christ. Bishop Frederick B. Fisher tells of being invited to address a representative and influential group in India. It was announced that he would speak on the subject, "American Ideals." As he was introduced, and was about to begin his address, a man arose in the middle of the audience and said, "We do not want to hear about American ideals; we do not care about American ideals. We want to hear about Christ. Tell us about Christ." Bishop Fisher eagerly seized upon the suggestion and replied, "I do not want to talk to you about American ideals; I want to talk to you about Christ." And for nearly two hours he talked to that hungry crowd about Christ, about his ideals in the Sermon on the Mount, about his way of life; and long after the dismissal the people stood about in groups asking questions and talking. America is not unlike India. America is hungry for Christ. Oh, this monologist of long ago, Peter, spoke for himself, spoke for all of us when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

"Our restless spirits yearn for thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad when thy gracious smile we see,
Blest when our faith can hold thee fast."

III

THE POEM TIED TOGETHER

A Unanimous Vote

Unite my heart to fear thy name.—*Psalm* 86. 11.

This is a plea for a unanimous vote. "*Unite* my heart to fear thy name." A unanimous vote for what? To make the individual life a life of loyalty to God. "Unite my heart to *fear thy name.*" A democracy is a rule of the majority. Religion is a rule of the entirety. A democracy can get along swimmingly on a fifty-one per cent rate. Religion demands the whole life. Majority rule is a good thing for democracies, else we could never come to decisions; we would do nothing but debate and seesaw back and forth. Most of our Presidents have been elected having received less than half of the entire popular vote, but having received a majority over the nearest competitor. In at least two instances the man declared elected received fewer votes than the defeated candidate. But in Presidential elections the final vote is cast by States, and in the electoral college the principle of the majority rule is maintained. Now, religion occupies an entirely different realm from poli-

tics. God is not content with a majority rule. He asks for all of life. He requires the entire vote. This prayer of the psalmist is an endeavor to bring the whole human life into agreement with the divine life of God, to record every last vote for him. "*Unite my heart to fear thy name.*" But who are the voters? I am only one, and if I vote "Yes" for God, doesn't that make the vote unanimous as far as I am concerned, as far as I have control? Yes, I am one, but I am more than one. I am four. I have four votes, and the four votes must be cast to make it unanimous. What are these four votes? They are all contained in this little word at the center—the word "heart." "Unite my *heart* to fear thy name."

This word heart is not only at the center of the text, it occupies the center of the Bible. No word is more generally used. It is found from Genesis to Revelation. It is peculiarly a Bible word. Open the Book anywhere and your eye may light upon it. The word "law" is a frequent Bible word, but the word "heart" surpasses it two to one. The word "love" is a Bible word, but the word "heart" easily outruns the word "love" in the number of times it is found. The word "soul" goes very deep in its scriptural applications, but the word "heart" plunges even deeper in its meaning

and power. Therefore the psalmist is right when seeking a unanimous vote he says, "Unite my *heart* to fear thy name."

Now, this word "heart" as used in the Bible has four distinct meanings, and the four meanings constitute the four votes which we each have, votes which should all be cast, to show where we stand. The first meaning of this word heart is "reason"—Unite my *reason* to fear thy name. The prophet's invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together," is an appeal to a man's intelligence and his sense of logic. Reason says, "There is a God." The simplest argument, but an argument that at once captures the reason is the argument of design. A design implies a designer. Here is this church in which we are met. Exactly fifty years ago men were working on it, finishing the walls, building these arches, putting on the roof, completing the spires. How was it put up? Certainly not by guess, or by chance, but by design. That design was made by an architect. This structure was built in the mind of a man before ever a shovel was thrust into the ground or a stone laid. We live in an immense world of law, order, and beauty. How did this perfect world come into being? Certainly not by chance. Reason says the design implies a designer. "In the beginning

God created the heaven and the earth." Why, even industry builds upon reason's conclusion, "There is a God." The greatest power-development plant in the world is Niagara. Why? Because of its size and the small per cent of waste. The two million people served by Niagara Electric Power take God into account. A small proportion of Niagara water is diverted, sent through a tunnel, drops two hundred feet, turns immense turbines, creating electricity, then the water enters the rapids, goes down to Lake Ontario, through the Saint Lawrence to the ocean; the sun lifts that water into cloud basins, the wind carries the clouds over the land, where the right atmospheric conditions condense the moisture and it falls in rain upon the thirsty land, making its way through brooks and streams again to the lake, the river, the tunnel, turning that wheel, lighting our homes, and doing our chores. Reason says, "It is God who is the silent but faultless partner in that unfailing process." Reason says that God works not only in the laws of nature and the universe but in the life of man. Reason says that God works supremely in the life of man. Reason says that man is God's sublimest creation. The psalmist voiced the verdict of the ages when he said, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and

hast crowned him with glory and honor." Reason says that what is sown must be reaped. Reason says that this holds in the field of morals as in the field of grain. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Men do not gather love of hate or refinement of beastiality. Reason says there is room for miracle in life. Reason says there is the necessity for miracle if life is to be redeemed. Jesus is that miracle. Reason accepts it. Reason declares that he is the "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Unite my heart to fear thy name is the prayer of the psalmist; it is our prayer too. Reason steps forth and declares, "I vote 'Yes.'"

In scriptural usage this word "heart" has a second meaning, that is *conscience*. Unite my *conscience* to fear thy name. In an early experience we read of David, "David's heart smote him"; that is, his conscience disapproved of his act. Job had the approval of his own heart. He said, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." He had a good conscience, his conscience upheld his course. This was the great apostle Paul's consuming desire, that he might "have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and

toward man," that his conscience might always vote "Yes" to God. Now, conscience is a very tender and sensitive thing. The needle in the ship's compass is not more sensitive than a true conscience. But the ship's compass may be abused, or so acted upon by other forces upon the ship itself that it is utterly useless as a true guide. So conscience may be ignored and mistreated until it were as well to have no conscience at all as to have so poor a conscience. We recognize the sensitiveness of the conscience; we also recognize its power. A good conscience is a great asset for a fighting man, or for a man and his work. Shakespeare said, "Conscience does make cowards of us all." Dare I question Shakespeare? I do at this point. Conscience makes courageous souls, not cowards. "Though war should arise against me, my heart shall not fear," said the psalmist. What does he mean? He means this (this is a case where the Hebrew word "heart" means "conscience"): "Though war should rise against me, my conscience tells me I'm right, and I will not be afraid." This finds its echo in a later generation in the Knight of the Round Table whose strength was "as the strength of ten," because his heart was pure. Here the poet uses the word "heart" for "conscience." He meant that his strength

was as the strength of ten because he had a good conscience. The spell of Roosevelt is still upon us; Roosevelt the fearless—why fearless? Because he had at his back the army of a good conscience. Now, if anyone is going to serve God with the fullness of his life, he must have a good conscience; his conscience must stand up in the might of its sensitiveness and intelligence and power and cry, "I vote 'Yes.' "

Unite my *desire* to fear thy name. The word "heart" in the Hebrew means also "desire." "He knoweth the secrets of the heart;" that is, he knoweth our secret desires. Desires are fundamental. They are the bedrock of character. Life is simply our desires put into action. Michael Pupin, in his delightful *Autobiography,* tells with pardonable pride of his joy when he became a citizen of this country. He calls this chapter of his experience "From Greenhorn to Citizenship." When the little clerk in the naturalization office called upon him in a perfunctory way to promise loyalty to the Constitution of the United States, it was not perfunctory to Michael Pupin; there was a strange mental exaltation which showed in his trembly voice as he replied, "I will, so help me God." A little later as he sat on the deck of the ship that was to

carry him to Europe for special study in his chosen life-work, he watched the busy harbor scenes, recalling the day, just nine years before, when he had landed in New York, fifteen years of age, a raw Serbian lad, alone, with only five cents to his name, and he said to himself: "Michael Pupin, the most valuable asset which you carried into New York harbor nine years ago was your knowledge of, and profound respect and admiration for, the best traditions of your race. The most valuable asset which you are now taking with you from New York harbor is your knowledge of, and profound respect and admiration for, the best traditions of your adopted country." What is Michael Pupin's life? The record of his desires. What is any man's life? His desires carried into effect. What are you to-day? You are the product of your desires. And if to-day your life is not what you want it to be, it can be changed only by changing your desires. What is a transformed life? Transformed desires. Paul was going down the Damascus highway. His face was set and his hands were clinched—bent on the persecution of the Christians. Then something happened. What was it? His desires were changed. The thing he most wanted to do a moment ago is now furthest from his desire; he has new de-

sires. Henceforward his vote may be written in the glorious sentence, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The word "heart" has a fourth meaning, and that is the *will*. And to make the vote of your life unanimous this fourth vote must be recorded:

Unite my reason to fear thy name.

Unite my conscience to fear thy name.

Unite my desire to fear thy name.

Unite my will to fear thy name.

Now, votes can be bought and voters can be corrupted. A corrupted reason, a tampered conscience, or wandering desire will lead you from God and his righteousness unless the Will enters and speaks an unequivocal "Yes" to God. Sometimes clouds gather around mountain peaks, and stay there despite the fact that a strong wind is blowing. Why is it? It is because it is cold up there, and the warm air, vapor-laden, climbing up the side of the mountain, reaching that cool region, makes clouds as fast as the wind can blow them away. There is a mental temperature which makes for clouds. And there is a mental temperature which makes for clearness. The temperature which makes for clearness is the Will. It is recorded in the Book and it is one of the most

hope-inspiring sentences of all literature: "If any man will do his will, he shall know." It does not say that he shall always understand; it means that he who answers "Yes" to God, he who wills to do the will of God is on the right track, his face is forward, and he is marching on, an upward path, and God is with him.

Say with the Psalmist—"Unite my heart to fear thy name." Say to God who calls you through Christ—

My reason answers "*yes.*"
My conscience answers "*yes.*"
My desire votes "*yes.*"
My will says "*yes.*"

IV

THE POEM MARCHES

Progress Pictured in the Word

God took the man, and put him into the garden.—*Genesis* 2. 15.

I John saw the holy city.—*Revelation* 21. 2.

These two verses are widely separated. From the standpoint of the printer's product there is a great distance between them. One is at the very beginning of the Book; the other is at the very end of the Book. From the standpoint of time they are widely separated. Many centuries elapsed between the writing of Genesis and the writing of Revelation. Viewed from the literary angle, these two texts are likewise widely separated—between them are the Pentateuch, historical books, poetical books, prophecies, Gospels and Epistles. But these verses stand for something vastly more significant than a difference represented by the printer's product, the century in which a particular portion was penned, or literary type. They represent what might be termed Progress According to the Word of God. Recall the two texts again: "God took the man and put him into the garden." "I John saw the holy

city." The dream of progress, according to the Word of God, as given by these two texts, may be described by four statements.

First, it is progress *from wilderness to orderliness.* On the one hand the garden. On the other hand the city. Wilderness—Orderliness. The garden of Eden may have been a delightfully idealistic place but it *was* a wilderness. The city is far from ideal, but at least it is orderly. The first step in Christian progress is to remove the wilderness condition and start creating orderliness. It is hard for us to believe, but it is none the less true, that every town and city across the wide expanse of the American continent was once a rampant wilderness. And that not so many years ago. Begin at any point on the Atlantic seaboard—Portland, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah—draw a line straight west and every town or city through which such a line passes was once a wilderness—straight through to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. And every farm such a line would touch, now fruitful and prosperous, was once a thick forest or a barren plain. The city's orderliness includes streets. The wilderness does not have streets. One must carry a compass in the wilderness or he is lost. He must grope his

way through dark and gloomy forests; he must cut and crowd his way through heavy, tangled underbrush. Not so with the city's streets. Even in their disorderliness they are orderly. Boston's streets are not very orderly from the standpoint of the city planner, following as they do the cowpaths and meandering lanes of the little settlement of long ago. But compared with the wilderness even Boston's crooked streets are the height of orderliness. Then there is Washington, so carefully and wisely planned, with its numerous circles and radiating avenues and streets. In the orderliness of its streets Washington is a city of which every American citizen may well be proud. Orderliness characterizes the streets of a city—paved, sewered, lighted, cleansed—even at their worst the streets of a city are infinitely better than the neglected road of the open country. The city's orderliness includes homes. The wilderness does not have homes. It has huts but not homes. It is a far cry from the hut to the home. It is the cry from wilderness to orderliness. I am constantly surprised and amazed as I go about the city, into the new sections, and along the older streets, and see street after street lined with houses. I ask myself: "Do people actually live in all these houses? How do they live? Where do

they work?" I ask myself these questions knowing all the time the answers—that people do live there, that they are actuated by much the same motives as I, and they, with millions of others of God's children, mark progress from the hut to the home, from Eden to Jerusalem, from the garden to the city, from wilderness to orderliness.

Progress according to the Word of God is described by a second statement, namely, progress from *singing birds to laughing children.* The laughter of the little child is not heard in Eden, but it bubbles over in Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah reached a high point—no prophet ever reached a higher—when painting the picture of the new Jerusalem he said of it: "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." He did not hear singing birds but laughing children. The highest point of all was reached when Jesus called the children to himself, saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." True, he also said, speaking of a sparrow, "One of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father," but his use of the birds was simply an illustration that God cares for his children. From singing birds to laughing children is progress. A na-

tion's attitude toward its childhood is a positive mark of that nation's place in civilization. Does the nation plan for its children? For the education of its children? Does it provide hospitals for its children? Homes for those who are homeless? The answer marks that nation's progress and place in the scale of civilization. A community's most valuable asset is its childhood. The combined assets of the First National, Marine Trust, Manufacturers and Traders Trust, Liberty Bank, and all the others cannot compass the value of a single child—if that child is your child. What would you take for your child? Here are the millions of these combined banks and here is your child—take your choice. Which shall it be?—"Welcome money! Farewell child!" or "Good-by money! Come to my heart, my child!" If this is so, that a community's most valuable asset is its childhood—and I do not hear a dissenting voice—why don't we plan and spend more for the right upbringing of the city's children! An interesting thing came to my attention a few days ago. It was in connection with the boys' work down at the Babcock Community House, Buffalo. Several groups of boys meet there as their headquarters, using its library, gymnasium, and game rooms. One day the director received a request from a

group of lads who called themselves the "Gang." They had been meeting in an old cellar, and they thought they would like to meet in the Community House and enjoy its privileges. The director asked the boys to write out the request with the name of the club and any other information. So, in a boy's scrawl the answer came: "Name, 'The Black Pirates.' Motto [they had two mottoes. The first]: 'One for all and all for one.' [The second]: 'Treason has its consequences.'" Of course, the director admitted the gang to the Community House and its privileges, and he will do them good. More and more I am impressed with the thought that we cannot do much with the old folks; they are fixed in their ways and habits of life. Our hope is with the children. We speak of the Sunday school as the arm of the church, but in a very true sense it is the church itself, for it is the church of to-morrow. A child is the greatest bond of sympathy and human interest imaginable. Among my kodak snapshots somewhere is my own picture taken in Yokohama. I am holding my youngest child in my arms, then a babe of less than a year. Pressed closely and eagerly about me is a motley crowd of Japanese men, women, and children. They are not interested in me, much as I might

want to flatter myself that they are. No, they are interested in the little white baby I am holding in my arms—skin and hair and eyes so unlike their own babies! I wonder if the peace of the world will not come through a little child rather than through disarmament and treaties and international courts! I am sure it will—through *the* little child whose name shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." From singing birds to laughing children is surely progress according to the Word of God.

Again, there is progress *from lonely paths to peopled ways.* The garden is a lonely place. The garden of Eden is a lonely place. Jerusalem is thronged with people. I love the country, but I love the city more. For every hour spent among flowers I want ten among folks; for every day in the country I want a week in the city. I recall going one day to the Kensington Gardens at the edge of London. If there are any more beautiful gardens anywhere, I do not know where they are. Here is a little lake, an old royal house on the bank, mirrored in the lake. Here is the rock garden, with paths winding into little gullies, and flowers and vines running everywhere among the rocks, and trickling streams of water.

Here are the fields stretching away toward the forest. And grass, such grass as grows only after years of care. Yonder among the trees is a lovely white Greek Temple. And flowers, flowers of all hues are there. Such a garden! And yet I tired of it in two or three hours and was ready to go back to Piccadilly Circle, London City, and folks. The peopled streets of the city lured me. In *Dreams in Homespun* Sam Walter Foss has a poem about "The House by the Side of the Road." We love his memory because of that poem. Do you remember what he says in that poem? "Let me live in a house by the side of the road"—but he does not stop there. He adds, "Where the race of men go by." It is the people going by his house who make it a coveted dwelling place.

> "There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
> In the place of their self-content;
> There are souls like stars, that dwell apart,
> In a fellowless firmament.
> There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
> Where highways never ran—
> But let me live by the side of the road
> And be a friend to man."

A road along which people do not pass is no road at all. They say there is no music where there is no ear to hear. I can believe that, though how it is to be proven I do not know.

It is not voices singing in harmony, organ pipes sounding in some thrilling combination of notes that makes music—no, it is the ears that hear, and where there are no people there are no ears. Have you ever considered that the Bible is a book about people. Take the people out of the Bible and there is no Bible left. Only a few people at first, but they swell in number. Only two people in the garden of Eden, but at the last a great multitude which no man can number thronging up the hills, crowding the throne of God. Have you considered that Jesus loved people? True, we read that now and again he went apart to be alone, to rest and pray. But where that is told once it is evidenced a score of times that he sought people. "When he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion." Over Jerusalem he stood and wept not for the city but for its people. "O people, people of Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." People stimulate us. Brain meeting brain, idea clashing against idea, effort dueling with effort is all stimulating. People gladden us. We sit down in a room and we are glad. It is not the room that makes us glad—be it never so beautiful—it is the people in the room. People are our

opportunity. Not materials but men, not factories but folks. We build with men and women and children. O God, keep our vision true in this—keep our face forward, our feet treading the upper road from lonely paths to peopled ways.

There is one final statement, and that is that progress according to God's Word is progress from the *forest primeval to the city eternal.* Humanity began with a forest; it ends with a city. No, it does not end; rather, its fulfillment is the city ideal. Look at the picture of that city, will you. "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem" (not old Jerusalem, beleaguered, bereft, poverty-stricken, disease-ridden, strife-torn Jerusalem, but *new* Jerusalem), "coming down from God . . . " (God the builder of Jerusalem, God the builder of Buffalo) "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (loveliest of all pictures—a bride adorned). "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, . . . and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." The law of the jungle is no

more. The law of the city of God prevails. For the downcoming of that city we toil and pray, with F. Mason North,

"Till sons of men shall learn thy love
And follow where thy feet have trod:
Till glorious from thy heaven above
Shall come the city of our God."

V

THE POEM IS REFRESHING

Wells by the Wayside

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.—*John 4. 13–14.*

Jesus *was on his way.* He was always on his way. He was not a loiterer. As many failures in life can be chalked up against the sin of loitering as against any other weakness of human nature. The student loiters over his books; it all comes out in the test. The workman loiters over his job; it is far from finished on scheduled time. The housewife loiters over the work in the domain of which she is queen; her domain, her house, shows it. The preacher loiters over his sermon; it is all revealed in the ragged thought and delivery he brings to his people on Sunday morning. A certain distinguished preacher who sometimes talks to youthful preachers says to them, "Young gentlemen, the way for a preacher to prepare his sermon is to quit mooning over it and prepare it." This advice is quite as excellent for lay-

men as well as preachers, "The way to do a task that is irksome is to quit mooning over it and do it." Stop loitering. Be on your way. As a boy I carried morning papers. I had a long paper route. At least it seems long to me now. I was up early, walked the mile to the office through the dark city streets, receiving my papers not later than five o'clock. If I went on my way and did not loiter I was home in time for breakfast, and on time at school. But if I loitered, the whole day was out of joint. Not that one should not stop for rest or a pleasant word. Not that at all. Rest is a virtue; loitering is a vice. Rest gives God a chance; loitering gives the devil a chance. Jesus rested; he did not loiter. He was on his way—

From *Judæa to Galilee.* Here is Judæa down in the south. Up north is Galilee. Samaria is between them. To get from Judæa to Galilee he *must needs* go through Samaria. What? Is there no other way to get from Judæa to Galilee? Certainly there is. He could cross the Jordan at the edge of Judæa, go up the east bank of the river, and recross into Galilee. But through Samaria was the shorter route, the more sensible, the more natural route. That, however, was not the reason. The reason is very plainly stated in the narrative. *He must needs go through Samaria.* Now, I believe

in divine guidance. I believe there is an inner compulsion, a wiser mind, a farther-seeing eye that directs the ways of the child of God. You are here in Buffalo. Why are you here in this metropolis of western New York? Not because you were born here. If I should request all in this audience who were born in Buffalo to stand, very few would rise to their feet. Nor are you here because you were born in the Empire State. A few more, but I doubt if a majority, were born in this State. Are you here because of your work? That is one reason, and a good one. You are here because this is the place where you are making your living. Are you here because this is the home town of the one you married? This is another reason, and a good one, for your presence in Buffalo. Are you here because of some friendship that reaches back into the years? You had a friend here and when the time came for you to make a change your friend beckoned, and you are here? Yes, that accounts for the residence of some in Buffalo. But there is a deeper reason, and I desire to announce my unqualified confidence in this reason, that is—Providence. It prevailed in the life of Jesus; certainly it prevails in the lives of the followers of Jesus. Jesus must needs go through Samaria. You must needs go through Buffalo.

There was a particular reason for Jesus' passing through Samaria. There is a special reason why in your journey through life you should go through Buffalo. There was a particular piece of work for Jesus to do in Samaria. There is a special work for you to do in Buffalo. I am honest when I say that I am here in Buffalo because I believe God wants me here. I am not here by the call of the church, or by the appointment of the Bishop, though I recognize these human instrumentalities. I am here because God said to me, "You must needs go through Buffalo." I never want to lose this confidence out of my life. Strive to keep in your experience—that God leads you.

Going through Samaria, Jesus came to a town called Sychar, a town linked with ancient history, linked also with his affections, for it was near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph, a portion of the very ground that Abram's feet trod when he "went out, not knowing whither he went." And a well was there—it was there then; it is there now. And Jesus, being weary, sat on the well to rest. Jesus, *being weary.* Even the Son of God experienced physical exhaustion. He hungered, he thirsted, he wearied. The writer of the Hebrews is correct, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the

feeling of our infirmities; but was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Jesus was weary and he stopped to rest. Let us thank God for the resting places, for the Jacob's Wells along the journey of life. There is the *well of sleep.* What a deep well is sleep! What refreshing waters are found in its depths! "He giveth his beloved sleep," says the psalmist. There is no more beneficent gift. It blesses our bodies. Tired from our daily work, sleep is our nightly, revivifying gift. If the normal man can, will regularly sleep, he can bear well-nigh any burden that is put upon him. While to the abnormal conditions of life sleep comes as a still more blessed gift. There is no medicine like sleep. If one sorrows, if one's mind is troubled, if his body is racked with pain, if, passing through a crisis, one has been denied sleep, or has slept only fitfully for a long period—if such a one can sleep as a baby sleeps, when morning comes the darkness will have past, the sun will be shining. Jacob's Well meant the rest of sleep to weary body and mind. Another well for the refreshing of fatigued bodies and minds is the *Sabbath day.* "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The Sabbath was made for man's body—to rest his body; for his mind—to tone up his mind; for his soul—

to feed his soul. The sin of Sabbath-desecration is not the desecration of the day, but the desecration of the purpose of the day; it is the depreciation of life's most precious values —the creative, sustaining powers of body, mind, and soul. He who ignores the divine command for the Sabbath day will find that his capital depreciates, a capital that cannot be replaced, and some day he will make a draft upon the bank and will find no balance, he will be a physical, mental, and spiritual bankrupt. The sin of Sabbath-desecration is not altogether in what one does, it is in what one does not do. The picture in the movie palace is just as good on Sunday as on a week day; it is the same picture; but a theater can never take the place of the church, nor the stage the altar, while a picture is a flimsy substitute for prayer. One may remain at home on the Sabbath day, "listening in," worshiping alone (one ought to spend more hours at home on Sunday than any other day; it is the home day), but a man will find the home of his heart more beautiful if he joins it with the house of God. The seven nights of sleep for the seven days of toil; and the Sabbath day for good measure, pressed down, heaped up and running over, are eight God-given wells for our refreshing every week we live.

As Jesus sat by the well, a WOMAN *came,* a woman of *Samaria,* to draw water. Erect, graceful, with her waterpot balanced upon her head. How the Oriental woman does it I cannot see; she carried water thus in Jesus' day; thus she carries it now. To this woman Jesus said, "Give me to drink," for he was thirsty. Have you ever thirsted for water? Not merely *desired* water, but *thirsted* for water? Once, I can recall but once, in my life I actually thirsted. Years ago, two of us plunged into the Pennsylvania woods for a two-day tramp. Each with a pack on his back and a gun in his hand. My companion said: "We will go through these woods. I know the way, and I know just where we will come out." He was a poor guide; we lost our way, wandered in every direction through the heat of the day. Tired and thirsty, still lost, we came upon a spring—I can see that spring this moment—and stooping to drink, I can feel again the thrill of the change that came upon me, as rising refreshed, the world was a different world: we could find our way, of course we could. Our thirst had been quenched.

Jesus said to the woman of *Samaria,* to the *woman of Samaria,* "Give me to drink." And she said to him, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman

of Samaria?" For the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with one another. For this purpose must Jesus go through Samaria, to rebuke race prejudice, to slay class hatred. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. They wouldn't even trade at their stores. We do better than that. Forever in heaven, forever on earth by heaven is religious or racial prejudice conquered when the Son of God says to a Samaritan woman, "Give me to drink."

The woman of Samaria said, "How can you ask this?" Jesus replied, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that now asks you for a drink, you would say to him, 'Give me to drink of the living water.'" How quickly is his physical exhaustion and thirst forgotten in the spiritual opportunity! She, her eyes still unseeing, counters, saying: "You cannot give me a drink. This is a deep well. You have nothing with which to draw. Are you greater than Jacob who gave us this well, who drank of it himself, his children and his cattle?" Quickly he states the truth, the truth regarding Jacob's Well, the truth with reference to every well, the truth of all the centuries—"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whoseoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water

springing up into everlasting life." Here are the two wells. They are always here. They are always everywhere. He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

It shall be IN *him.* Your physical thirst is quenched not by the water in the spring, but by the water from the spring that you put into your mouth. That which cannot be done with the mountain spring Jesus does with the spiritual waters—the spring shall be *in you.* Most of the troubles of life are not on the outside but on the inside. And most of the remedies for most of the troubles of life are not outside remedies but inside remedies. As spiritual and moral physicians we give quack advice. We say to folks: "You should have a change of scene; a different environment will help you, different associations. You must take up another line of work." Nine times out of ten the trouble is not with the outside but with the inside. People do not need a different outside, they need a different inside. They need the fountain of the gospel—that will supply them and keep them wherever they are, whatever they do. Here is a woman—I know her—she is seventy-six years of age. She lives alone in her little home in this city. She has

been alone for several months. I said to her, "Are you all alone now?"

"Yes, all alone."

"And do you keep your fires, stay alone all night?"

"Yes."

"Don't you get frightened, and aren't you lonely?"

"No"—and this is exactly what she said to me—"I talk with my Lord; I cannot tell you what joy and companionship I have as I talk with him." What she told me was not cant. It is her actual experience. She has *in her* the well of water, daily, hourly springing up; springing up here and now into everlasting life.

Jesus must needs pass through Samaria to speak to a LONE WOMAN *at the well.* This is my theology—or, if you do not like the word "theology," this is my philosophy; and if you do not fancy either "theology" or "philosophy," this is my conviction—Jesus came into this world to speak to the individual soul. *Jesus came from the heart of God to speak to your heart.* He came from the love of God to offer you his love. I can't fathom it, but I believe it. I don't understand it, but I know it. There is nothing else that satisfies. O stumbling church, O faltering saints, O hesi-

tant preachers, God has set you here among men—and you can't say it too often, or too variedly, or too vigorously, for they need it. We all need it—how we need it: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." *It "shall be in him."*

VI

THE POEM HAS POLISH

Adornment of the Doctrine

Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—*Titus 2. 10.*

This little word "adorn" captivates me; it deserves careful scrutiny. One may well take it into the laboratory and place it beneath the microscope and examine it in all its detail. Adorn! James Moffatt in his excellent translation uses the word ornament. "Be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Saviour in all respects," is his version. We sometimes say of a certain thing, "It is ornamental rather than useful." If it is a choice between being useful or ornamental, we would not hesitate in our choice, would we? But is it a choice? Not when it comes to discipleship. Paul wanted the disciples of the Saviour to be both useful and ornamental. This is the burden of his letter to Titus. "Exhort the churches under you," says he, "to sound doctrine; and admonish them also," he continues, "to the adornment of that doctrine." Even sound doctrine may become ineffective or repulsive if it is unattractively arrayed. Let us pause a

moment in the laboratory over the microscope and examine this matter of adornment!

God the Creator adorns his creations. In the language of Genesis, in that great story of the creation, man was put in the garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it"; that is, to adorn it, to take note of the garden's ornamental possibilities as well as its useful qualities. This garden of the world which God has given us is a garden of beauty, a vision of loveliness. When God created the mountains he did not simply lift them up, huge barnacles on the world's surface, and leave them, naked and unadorned. No, the rocks, though barren, take strange, fantastic shapes, like New Hampshire's "Old Man of the Mountains." Or he covered those rocks with a thin layer of soil that trees and shrubs might hide the nakedness of the mountainside. Or, forbidding the trees, he spread over the mountains a soft, velvety carpet of heather. Oh, the purple heather of the hills of Scotland! When God created the sea he did not make an enormous mill pond, stagnant, motionless, with smooth, unbroken shores like the rim of a platter. He put motion into the sea, currents and cross currents, waves and tides; he broke the shore line and formed quiet harbors, cool nooks, inviting inlets; he thrust peninsulas, long fin-

gers and arms out into the sea; he peopled the sea with islands, luring to discovery, adventure and romance—all this for the adornment of the sea. Or here are these autumn days, in the language of the poet, "the melancholy days, the saddest of the year." They would be melancholy but for their adornment. But God has adorned them with beauty and wonder. The Creator might have arranged to cause the leaves to drop from the tree in one day, under the drive of a tremendous wind, but he did not. First he touches the leaves with a little color, a few fall; then time brings a deeper, richer color, and a few more drop; another wave of the artist's wand, a deep-dyed red and a rich, pure gold is the response of the leaves—it is the adornment of the Creator. The rose is the queen among flowers. The rose would be quite as beautiful without its fragrance; the fragrance is God's adornment. God the Creator adorns his creations.

Man the builder adorns his structures. We could live and thrive in a dwelling of four walls and a roof. But we do not. We adorn our houses. Paint and paper, carpets and rugs, cushioned chairs and mattressed beds, telephones and electric lights are all adornments. We have come to class them as necessities, but they are not, they are all a result of

man's desire to ornament life. We could worship in a barn, but we do not; we adorn our churches. What is a graceful spire? Certainly not a necessity; it is an adornment, costing thousands of dollars perhaps, but worth the price. In Scotland, not far from the gently flowing River Tweed, are the ruins of Melrose Abbey. Begun in the seventh century, suffering again and again at the hands of contending clans or enemy invaders; plundered and burned; shattered, finally, by the guns of Cromwell, portions of it still stand, its very ruins witnessing the care which the architects and builders expended upon their labor. No building, ancient or modern, is more beautifully adorned than Melrose Abbey, its delicate carvings in stone "like bundles of laces which garlands had bound." It is a far cry from Melrose Abbey by moonlight to New York's skyline by midday. But even New York's skyline—and there is nothing like it in all the world—so practical, towering, and overwhelming—is not devoid of adornment. Those great buildings are adorned like temples, for temples they are, temples of business. One could ride quite as speedily and safely from New York to Buffalo on a train whose right of way was overgrown with weeds, strewn with debris and refuse, but a railroad right of way

is clean-swept, with grass that is cut and trees that are trimmed growing along the edge—it is the adornment of the country's passenger and freight lines. Man, the builder, adorns his structures.

The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer taught that "the ultimate good is beauty, and that the ultimate joy lies in the creation or cherishing of the beautiful." If we apply this teaching to modern business, we must say that the ultimate joy of a great building is not its practical features, but its ornamentation; the ultimate joy of the business block across Tupper from my church is not that it has so many feet of floor space, so many offices and stores, wide halls and swift elevators, but that it is beautifully planned and constructed, an ornament to any street. The ultimate joy of an automobile is not that it will go sixty miles an hour, or that it will take the Pekin hill "on high," but that it has graceful lines and a beautiful finish. It was one of Schopenhauer's contemporaries, Immanuel Kant, who taught that "an interest in the beauty of nature for its own sake is always a sign of goodness." That he who loves flowers, for the beauty of the flowers, not for what they may bring in cold cash on the market, has something of goodness in him, of which this

love of beauty in nature, for beauty's sake, is a sign. But long before Schopenhauer and Kant, long before Plato and Aristotle, there was one, a philosopher-psalmist, who said, "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary," and who prayed, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." And now, greatest of all, the apostle lifts up his voice and bids us "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." I will name four things where we should exercise the grace of adornment.

First, *let us adorn our denominationalism with considerateness for other denominations!* There is a great deal of talk about denominations. Some of it is wise and some of it is foolish talk. It is wise talk when we seek to avoid overlapping and duplication of effort. In a little town not many miles from my home, a town that barely holds its own in population, there are six churches—one Catholic and five Protestant. The Catholic is a well-built, strongly intrenched church; the Protestant churches, with one exception, live at a "poor, dying rate." How much better that the five Protestant churches become one, or two at the most. If the Presbyterian church is the strongest church in that particular town—as it happens to be—let the Methodist church, which cannot support a pastor, go in a body

over to the Presbyterian church! That is wise talk. But it is foolish talk when we get so broad that we are thin, when we benevolently proclaim: "Let us do away with all denominations; let us have one big church." As well do away with all stores and have one big store; as well destroy individual homes and organize home-keeping in a series of social centers, all built on the same plan. It is a good thing for a nation, for the religious life of the nation and the moral and religious interest of the people, when there are a number of great religious bodies. England is better off, infinitely better off, to-day with her nonconformist churches—Wesleyan, Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian—and State Church than she was in the old days when it was a crime to worship God by any other form than that laid down by the State Church. America is better off with her great Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, Disciples, and Episcopal denominations in friendly labor and competition than she would be were we all one denomination. We purge each other, we vie one with the other in our zeal for a pure and wholehearted service to our Saviour. There is only one thing better than a loyal Methodist, and that is a loyal Methodist considerate of other denominations—he is an adorned Methodist.

Again, *let us adorn our sobriety with cheerfulness!* There is no question that we are working toward a sober world. England is a long way from Prohibition, but England is a much soberer nation than she was in the days before the Great War. There is plenty of drinking throughout the British Isles to-day, but there is much less drinking than ten years ago. A sober nation and race is no longer a question solely of religion; religion was once the lone champion of temperance and prohibition. Religion has now been joined by medicine, science, and economics. They are the unbeatable quartet. Medicine says: "The man who drinks shortens his life; he is a bad insurance risk; we will not recommend him for insurance. The chances are that in the crisis of the disease he will lose." Business says: "We must have sober employees; we will not hire a man to run our trains, man our machines, or do anything that a self-respecting man is ambitious to do if he is known to take even one drink." Science enters and by its accurate investigations, clean and clear-cut from the laboratory, substantiates every claim of religion, economics, and medicine with regard to strong drink. An inestimable asset of the ardent prohibitionist is cheerfulness. The teetotaler pictured in the cartoons as a tall,

thin man, with long, black Prince Albert coat, high collar, black bow tie, high black hat, scowling face, glowering eyes, and a mouth turned down, altogether soured on the world, is wrong. The modern prohibitionist is nothing like that—he is prosperous, becomingly dressed, brisk, aggressive, businesslike, a man of the hour, with a cheerful countenance. America is engaged in one of the greatest moral struggles of history, the boldest thing a nation ever did, a strike for a sober nation. We are going to win, but winning will be the easier and pleasanter if we wear the ornament of cheerfulness. Sobriety is a blessed habit; I know only one thing better—sobriety adorned with cheerfulness.

Third, *let us adorn our liberality with quietness!* How beautifully did Jesus state the ornamentation of liberality in his Sermon on the Mount! He touched upon many vital things, none more vital than this. "Take heed," said he, "that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." Who could state it better?—"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." This matter of liberality is most important in the work of the church and the advance of the Kingdom. The great work Christ has set us here to do can never be done by niggardliness, not by caution in our giving; we must be liberal. We must put our religion at least on a par with our automobile and our clubs and the theater. No true child of the Father can be liberal toward his luxuries and stingy with God. Liberality is a noble practice, for it is the reflection of one's own spirit. But even winsome liberality has an added charm, the adornment of quietness.

There is a fourth thing to record, namely, *Let us adorn our talents with love!* Each of us has a talent for something; that talent is made effective and beautiful through the adornment of love. Recall the great classic on love, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Do you know what gave rise to that chapter? There was considerable contention among the Christians in Corinth over the importance of

their gifts. One said, "My gift of prophecy is the most important."

Another rose up and replied, "No, my gift of miracles takes precedence of prophecy."

A third one protested, "You are both wrong; my gift of healing is most important of all."

Then a fourth voice was heard, "You are all wrong, my gift of teaching is above all else."

So they contended and wasted in contention precious days that should have been used in activity. Here Paul enters, and gaining confidence by his remark, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," says, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way, the way of love." "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal"—it is love that adorns eloquence. "And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries, . . . and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." Love adorns knowledge. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three," but the greatest adornment of life is love.

"That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," admonished Paul. "I pray thee, O God, that I may be beautiful within," prayed Socrates. Adorn us, O God, within and without—make us every whit clean.

VII

THE POET'S RHYTHM

I Love a River

He showed me a pure river.—*Revelation 22. 1.*

A river has MOTION. Why do we feel so differently toward a pool and a river? We stand by the side of a pool or tiny lake and we are as calm and placid as the quiet waters at our feet. We say, "Let us build a cottage here by the side of this calm bit of water and take our ease." A river has a different effect upon us. Standing by the side of a river we are inspired to action. We are perfectly willing to sit on its banks and dream for a little while—but not forever. There is something about the motion of a river that energizes us and sends us back with zeal and enthusiasm to our work. The motion of the river is onward; it is progressive. On and on, forever on, day and night, summer and winter—

> "Thou pausest not in thine allotted task,
> Oh darkling river!"

The Christian religion is not like the pool; it is like the river. It has motion. It is progressive. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but he

belongs to all the world. With every advancing wave of immigration the Christian faith has moved forward. Northern Europe, western Europe, England, America—"Westward the star of empire takes its way," and "Forward the star of Bethlehem lures us on." With every discovery and invention the Christian religion has kept step. In fact, it has been responsible for most of them, it has been their forerunner. The printing press, plow, steam engine, electric motor, these are the products of the Christian faith, the Christian brain. The Christian faith has moved forward with all the problems of civilization. Jesus could solve the problems of Palestine and he can solve the problems of Pennsylvania. The Christian faith was sufficient to the needs of Nazareth, and it is not impotent as it faces the dire necessities of New York. The Christian religion applied, *applied*—underscore it once more, emphasize it again—the Christian faith *applied* will meet any situation, solve any problem anywhere to-day. Christian faith moves forward with all the changing experiences of human life. One day a little child is presented at the altar of the Church of God and he is baptized in the name of the Christian faith. Another day I stand in a home which has been visited by death and I read from this Book and say the

words, the final words used as we lay away the body of a soul held dear—I do it in the name of the Christian religion. There are many years between this tiny babe and this aged saint, but the Christian faith has moved along and is sufficient for all those years. There are four boys in my house, delegates to the Older Boys' State Conference. I am more than twice as old as these boys—but our faith is the same, but it is not the faith of the pool; it is the faith of the river—a faith that has moved on through all the years and experiences separating those boys and me. What is there in religion anyhow? What is there in a river? Motion. The religion of Jesus is not typified by the Dead Sea, but by the moving Jordan.

A river has CLEANSING *power.* Campers upon the banks, when they have done with their breakfast, and before they are off for the day, throw their refuse into the river and the river uses its cleansing power. Villages along the way turn their waste into the river, and the river cleanses it. Not long ago I spent Sunday in the village of Akron. Akron was just recovering from a very serious typhoid epidemic, during which a considerable portion of the people were laid low with sickness, an epidemic brought on solely because they failed to use the river method in disposing of their

refuse. The crowded city of New York pours hundreds of sewers into the Hudson and East Rivers, but the mighty sea and the currents of the sea cleanse and make healthful and safe what otherwise would be a city of disease and death. A river cleanses. The religion of Jesus cleanses. Naaman, captain of the host of Syria, a great man with his master, honorable, a mighty man of valor, but a leper, dipping seven times in Jordan, cleansed of his leprosy, is witness that faith cleanses.

The prodigal, soiled with the filth of the swine, made clean again; dead in trespasses and sins, now come to life; lost, now found; his soul black with the sin he had sinned, now white with the forgiveness of father and of God—is testimony that religion cleanses. Do you remember Vachel Lindsay's picturesque, sometimes grotesque, but faithful picture of General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army? The poet calls it "General William Booth Enters Heaven." He is followed by a motley crowd, cleansed and changed by faith in Christ.

"Booth led boldly with his big bass drum.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely, and they said, 'He's come.'
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Walking lepers followed rank by rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,

"Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail!
Vermin-eaten saints, with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of death—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

"It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts that land made free!
Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel head, the snout, the jowl;
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green."[1]

Better still, best of all—let the prophet state in perfect language the paramount truth—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." There is vice enough in Buffalo and sin enough in America and crime enough in the world and filth enough everywhere, but I dare not think what Buffalo, America, and the world would be like with the river of the faith of Jesus all dried up. We may well say with Norman McCleod, who saw the poor wretch on the way to the scaffold, "There, but for the grace of God, goes Norman McCleod." Religion cleanses. "Are *you* washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

There is BEAUTY *along the river.* The river produces beauty. The river makes beautiful fields and hills, paths, and scenes that otherwise would be dull and forbidding. When I

[1] Isa. 5. 18.

go to Philadelphia I like to make the trip by day because the Pennsylvania Railroad winds down through the valleys following the bed of the river, in and out, crossing back and forth, here and there a little town or larger city, hills rising majestically on either side, all made beautiful by the river. When you hear the name "Hudson" what do you see? You see a valley made beautiful by a great river. Take the Hudson away, put there instead a swamp or immense pool, the whole beauty of the Hudson valley would be swept away forever. Religion creates beauty. Why, even the dry old Westminster Confession acknowledges this, for there the question is asked, "What is the chief end of man?" And the answer is, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and *enjoy him forever.*" The psalmist says, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." That is, cause a river to run right through your worship. Let a river start somewhere back of the pulpit and run right straight through the church, out through the vestibule and the main doors, and on and on forever—"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Religion makes the home beautiful. Talk about "Homes Beautiful" for the public to flock through and look upon all the rich rugs and elegant furniture and appropriate hangings and subdued lights—they do not

make the home beautiful, it is Christ who makes the home beautiful. Christ makes all the world beautiful, wherever you live, whatever your surroundings—

> "Heaven above is softer blue,
> Earth around is brighter green,
> Something lives in every hue
> Christless eyes have never seen."

Bernard Shaw makes the indigent artist in one of his books gasp with his dying breath, "I believe in Michael Angelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt; in the might of design, the mystery of color, the redemption of all things by beauty everlasting, Amen." Well, I believe in the redemption of man by the beauty of Christ the Saviour. Julia Ward Howe sang—and tell me, is there any sentence more imaginative and inspiring than this?—"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea." There is a debate whether beauty really exists or whether it is simply in one's eye; that beauty is not in the scene yonder, but in my eye that beholds that view. I think we can close that debate, namely—get a river in your soul. See everything with a river in it, then the wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad, and the desert blossom as the rose.

A river gives REFRESHMENT. There is something about a river that revivifies one; one

cannot be long depressed, or give way to sullen moods, if he lets the river teach him. There is refreshment in religion. During the influenza epidemic of a few years ago the head of a nurses' training school in a large city hospital found herself obliged, along with many of her staff, to work twenty hours out of the twenty-four, and at the end of two weeks she was so worn out that one Saturday night she said to herself, "I must either consult a nerve specialist or"—and just why she suggested the other alternative she did not know—"or go to church." The next evening toward eight o'clock her nurses saw her slipping out of the hospital and protested that she ought to go to bed; instead she walked a few blocks to a neighboring church, had the current of her thought directed by the worship into a new channel, felt herself uplifted, calmed, renewed, refreshed, and she returned with a new spirit and inner strength for her work. The Christian faith does that. A religious service —if it is what it should be—is not oppressive but impressive; not dull but bright; not down-pulling but uplifting; not depressing but inspiring. Robert Louis Stevenson begins a letter with the sentence, "I have been to church, and I am not depressed." Oh to have every religious service enable people to say—stating

it positively rather than negatively, "I have been to church, *and I am refreshed*"! The psalmist, deep in the pit of discouragement, surrounded by enemies who, as he said, "wanted to eat up his flesh"; forsaken by friends, even by his own family, found refreshment in his faith, for he declared, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." In the hour of your depression let the river of your faith refresh you, for that river makes glad the hearts of the people of God.

Progress, Cleansing, Beauty, Refreshment, but I suppose the greatest contribution of the river is that *it is* LIFEGIVING. Ezekiel had a vision of a river and he said of it, "It shall come to pass, that everything, . . . whithersoever the river shall come, shall live." Life throbs where the river goes. Mills and factories are built along the river's edge and one hears the music of their machinery. Living cattle meander across the fields to the river, stand in the shallow water along the edge, cool their heated bodies and quench their thirst. Birds fly over the rivers, descend to the surface, bathe and drink. Living trees grow along the river, adorning its banks. Towns and cities plant themselves by the river, throbbing with life. The river does

that, for the river gives life. Religion is life-giving. "I never knew what it was to live until I found Christ"—how often do we hear that!

"He showed me *a pure river of water of life,* . . . proceeding out of the throne of God." It is one thing to know of a river because you happen to have learned it in geography, or seen it as a line on the map; it is quite another thing to know a river by experience, drink from its fountain sources, play along its banks, swim in its currents, work in the busy shop on its bank. It is one thing to have a few facts about religion, a cold and purely ethical confidence in the Christian faith; it is quite another thing to be filled with all the fullness of God, to possess as your own, your joyous own, the life that is in Christ Jesus. What is there in religion anyhow? A river, a river—flowing from the throne of God to the soul of man.

VIII

THE POEM POINTS WITH HOPE

Until!

Until the day dawn.—*2 Peter 1. 19.*

Welcome, the dawn! The child, on Christmas day, eagerly awaits the dawn. He awaits it, though he does not wait for it; he is up before dawn, and downstairs where the Christmas tree grows in the soil of gifts to gladden his young heart. The one who is ill looks for the dawn. Nights are so much more trying; they seem so much longer to the one who is not well, who cannot sleep. Do you remember Robert Louis Stevenson's pathetic picture of his childhood; he was not well, and there were nights when he could not sleep—would the dawn never come? When it did, it was with a bang of relief. We speak of the "dawn of a better day." We mean that things are going to be better. Things have been hard and trying, but they are going to be better in the "dawn of a better day." "Hope springs eternal in the human breast" is another way of putting it. Hope says, always says, no matter how dark the night, nor how black the experience, hope says that the dawn

will surely come. We are always looking ahead. To-morrow bulks large in human experience and planning. Business will be better in the future. We will be more friendly to-morrow. I will preach a better sermon next time—I am always saying that to myself—my next sermon will be worth while. We are going to spend more time at home; we will pay more attention to the children; we are going to do our duty better by Christ and his church—to-morrow. These are the things we are saying, but always they are in the future. Human endeavor is marked by the milestones of a series of daydawns. To establish your business, to pay for your home, to bring your children to maturity without fault or heartache—these and similar objects have been ever before you, and you have said to yourself, "When that is accomplished then I can rest." Let us take this winsome phrase and weave it into some of our human problems and experiences!

Until the daydawn of SIGHT *we will use* FAITH. "Where I cannot walk by sight I will walk by faith" is the way a certain devout soul puts it. It is all the same. However much we would like to live life by the rule of sight, we cannot do it; a goodly proportion of life is ordered by the rule of faith. A merchant

in the city orders a large quantity of goods. He does not see the goods he orders until after their delivery, until he has already obligated himself to pay for them. Fully seventy-five per cent of the business of the world is done by the rule of faith rather than sight. Should we be more exacting in the things of the soul than in things material? One evening a while ago at a Sunday-school gathering I took note of the children—all kinds, all ages, all sizes—not quite all colors—and I thought to myself, We are doing this almost entirely on the basis of faith; we cannot see what these girls and boys are going to grow up into, we can hardly see that we are having any effect upon their lives even now, yet pastor, Sunday-school officers, teachers, parents go right ahead, working by faith that all will come out right. The greater test of character is faith. Thomas had difficulty at this point. He could not believe that Jesus was risen from the dead. He asserted as much—"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Then came Jesus saying, "Reach hither thy finger, and thy hand; feel the nail prints and the spear wound, and be not faithless but believing." "My Lord and my God,"

cried Thomas. That exclamation, however, is not the climax of the incident. The climax is Jesus' calm statement to Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Until the daydawn of sight we will use faith.

Until the daydawn of EXPLANATION *we will* TRUST. There are many things we would like to have explained. For example, we have not yet had fully explained to us the meaning of pain. In a world where everything is so well arranged, so orderly; in a world of beauty and loveliness, why is pain permitted to mar it all? It does not fully explain pain to tell us that pain is the result of some broken law, some misconduct on our part or on the part of others connected with us. That helps but does not fully explain, for there are experiences of pain which can scarcely be accounted for in that way. Then there is poverty. Who can explain poverty? It does not fully explain poverty to say that some people are shiftless, others are lazy, others are incompetent; that there are people whom, if you furnish them with an abundance of money, a year from now they would be as poor as ever. That may be one answer to poverty, but that does not fully explain why this awful sore of pov-

erty festers the body of our modern civilization. Pain and poverty are only two things that mar life—besides these and closely akin to them are sickness, disease, incurable leprosy, rampant cancer, hunger, loneliness, longings ungratified—who can explain these things? Or here, right here in three little words, is a vast world of mystery crying out for explanation—birth, life, death. Explain them! Then there is that world of mystery contained in the individual experience. "Explain, explain" is a prayer common to us all. Well, until the daydawn of explanation we will trust. That is what Paul said. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now we know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

"In the glorious Hereafter,
When the veil is swept away,
I shall know with perfect knowledge
What I marvel at to-day."

Until the daydawn of RIGHTEOUSNESS *we will keep our* FIGHTING ARMOR *buckled on.* It seems like mockery to use the language of war in time of peace. But it is perfectly correct. War is a good thing—only let it be war against evil. This war that I am thinking about does not take life—it gives life. It does not slay thirty-three million people in

five brief years; rather it enlarges life for many times that number. This war does not maim men and send them into life with half a chance at making good; it magnifies their abilities and opportunities, and multiplies their chances at making good. This war does not destroy homes, ruthlessly setting the torch to whole villages, sending shot and shell and poison gases across entire cities to instantly wipe them out as by some one dreadful calamity; rather the war I have in mind builds homes, creating villages and cities as centers of happiness. This war does not set nations against one another, stirring up hate, peddling propaganda against each other until they are ready to leap at one another's throats; it unites nations in the common war against a common enemy, as the United States and Cuba were united against the devastating fever; as the nations of the world are joined in their war upon the soul-destroying opium traffic. The fighting spirit in man is a good thing, providing it is not the spirit of murder but of life; fighting, not to down our brother, but to lift him. This attitude is scriptural. "Wherefore," says Paul, "take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,

and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, . . . the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." None other than Jesus himself made the astounding statement, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." He, the Prince of Peace, whose coming was accompanied by the angel chorus of peace and good will, says so plainly that it cannot be misunderstood, "I send a sword, not peace." But one has only to read the context to know that what Jesus means is not the sword of steel, the symbol of murderous war; he has in mind the struggle between righteousness and unrighteousness. The line is clearly drawn for that purpose, for the eternal war against evil of every kind the sword is in his hand. Therefore, we will not discard our martial hymns in our hymnal; rather we will give them a Christian interpretation. And when we sing,

> "Onward, Christian soldiers,
> Marching as to war,"

we are not singing of the war of America against Germany, nor the war of America against Japan. We are singing of the war of Christian America and Christians everywhere against evil everywhere in every form.

Until the daydawn of REALIZED DREAMS *we will keep right on* PLYING OUR TRADE. We all have dreams. Or we should have if we do not. We have ambitions we long to see fulfilled, plans consummated; those dreams cannot be too rosy. "Hitch your wagon to a star" is no mere fancy. It might well be, "Hitch your wagon to Bethlehem's Star." It means that every normal life has dreams, ambitions, purposes, plans one intends to work out. There is only one way to realize those dreams and that is to keep right at work. We must ply our trade. Someone has given us these startling figures. Take one hundred men at random who are now twenty-five years of age. Forty years from now—when those men will have reached sixty-five years—this will be their standing: One will be rich, four will be in comfortable circumstances, five will have to continue working, thirty-six will be dead, fifty-four will be dependent upon others. What the basis in truth is of these figures I do not know, I give them only as I found them. True or not, they illustrate the point: we must keep right on plying our trade. Now, here are some other figures, much more significant, for they relate not to earthly success, but heavenly; not to material riches, but to spiritual. We are told that twenty years are required to

bring man from the state of a plant, in which he exists in the womb of his mother; and from the state of an animal, which is his condition in infancy, to a state in which the maturity of reason begins to make itself felt. Twenty centuries are necessary to discover even a little of his structure. An eternity would be required to know anything of his soul. Is the point well taken? Then until the daydawn of dreams realized we will keep right on plying our trade.

Until the daydawn of HUMAN PERFECTION *we will keep right on* PREACHING CHRIST *as humanity's one and only Hope.* It was a torn and weary world to which Jesus came in Bethlehem long ago. He was the hope of the generation in which he lived in bodily form. A record—not an exhaustive record, but a record sufficiently clear and complete to enable us to make positive statements—is given us in the New Testament. Recall the hope that he inspired in men's hearts, whatever their trouble. Here is Peter. What is his trouble? Impulsiveness, speaking without thinking; wavering, unsteadiness—Christ steadies him until Peter, who was as shifting sand, became as rock for steadfastness. Here is Thomas. What is his trouble? Doubt. The same trouble uncounted multitudes since have had. But Jesus so as-

sures Thomas that the doubting one cries, "My Lord, and my God!" Here is Zacchæus. What is the trouble with Zacchæus? Indifference, complacency, the complacency born of success. "Come down, I will sup with thee this day, Zacchæus." And Jesus fills the stony heart of Zacchæus with love. Here are Mary and Martha. What is their trouble? Sorrow. "Our brother is dead, dead." "Thy brother shall live again." "We know that he will rise at the last day." "No, not in the last day, but now. Lazarus, come forth!" The crape was torn from the door, and their mourning was turned into rejoicing. Here are little children. What is their trouble? They are not wanted, they are under foot, they are in the way—"Run along now, we are engaged in big business." "Run not away," said Jesus, rebuking those who spoke, "run not away, but run to me," and laughing children were the jewels he held in his arms. Now, I read in the Book that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He who was the hope of the world then is the hope of the world now. "We preach Christ crucified"—a stumbling-block, foolishness to some. "But to them which are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And so Bashford goes to China—preaching Christ; Oldham goes to South America

—preaching Christ; Stuntz goes to the Philippines—preaching Christ; Grenfell goes to Labrador—preaching Christ; Jones is in India—preaching Christ. We are here, each in his place—preaching Christ as humanity's one hope. Facing sin, sorrow, death, with Christ.

Until the day dawn. Literally, until the morning comes in like a wedge pushing aside the darkness, bringing in the light, giving us a star even in the daytime.

IX

THE POEM COMMITTED TO MEMORY

I Cannot Forget

If I forget.—*Psalm 137. 5.*

They are down in Babylon—a company of the children of Israel—carried there as captives. One evening, worn from having done a slave's work through the hot day, a group of these lovers of Zion sit on the bank of the river, resting. Now come some of their masters, the Babylonians, bent on an evening's diversion. "Here, here," they cry to the Israelites, "show us your mirth; sing us some of your songs; you say that Zion is famed because of its music; give us a sample. Sing us some of your boasted songs of Zion." In their hearts these captive Israelites say, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Then they add, "Though we cannot sing we must not forget." And right there they register a vow, they call down upon their heads a drastic penalty: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." If I forget! It is a temptation to forget. It is so easy to forget—some things.

We must not forget. Our salvation depends upon it. Progress hinges upon memory. If civilization is to hold her own, let alone climb "the steep ascent of heaven," we must not forget. Rudyard Kipling once wore the mantle of a prophet, and wrote his name on the roll of the immortals by a single utterance. When the British Empire was in a high fever of excitement over the sixtieth anniversary of Victoria's accession to the throne, Kipling was asked to write the Jubilee poem. The people were all aglow over the greatness of the empire, they were for boasting and glory. Kipling went aside and when he appeared he presented a Jubilee poem built up around the one thought —Do not forget. Boast if you want to—but do not forget. Count your ships of war—but do not forget. Number the carriers in your merchant marine—but do not forget. Measure your territory upon which the sun never sets—but do not forget. Not since the days of the prophets has a man reached a greater height of prophetic utterance than Kipling reached in his Recessional—

"The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
If, drunk with the sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not thee in awe,

Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the law:
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

Let not the sinner forget the pit from which he was digged. Recall the testimony of the psalmist, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." The miry clay!—the solid rock! Shifting sands!—established ways! "Once I was blind, but now I see," said the blind man whose eyes Jesus had touched with light. Now he sees sunrises and sunsets, field and stream, friends and loved ones, but he must not forget that once his eyes were closed to these dear objects. We are apt to forget our former state. The rich man, become rich through his own honest efforts, may all too easily forget that once he was poor. Now he can go anywhere to get anything he desires to eat; he may live on the fat of the land, but there was a time when he did not know the source of the next meal—let him not forget that. Even so, the sinner, reclaimed, redeemed, may forget his former state. Here on the heights it is easy to forget that he was once down in the depths. It is hard for him to believe that his cup, now running over, once contained only dregs, and bitter dregs at that. Let not the sinner forget. Who

are the sinners? We are all sinners, potentially if not actually. Take out of your life the influence of a religious atmosphere—a Christian home, the Christian Church, the teaching and power of Christ—take that all out of your life and where would you be today? Would not the answer be the psalmist's answer, "The miry clay"? Let not the sinner forget the depths from which he was digged.

Let not the saint forget the heights to which he should climb. There is a fine verse over in Ephesians telling us about these heights: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That is, the ideal must be retained. Hosts of young people are going to college these days. Not all of them make of their college course a success. Only those young people who set before them an ideal and cling to that ideal, through all discouragements, against all allurements, will get much out of their college course. It is a bad thing, it is a cowardly thing, as we vulgarly say, "to lie down on the job." This is the record we chalk up against many a man who disappoints us in his life-work; we dismiss him by saying, "He lay down on the job." It is a crude but graphic description of many a Christian. What

shall be said of the one who stands before the altar of the church, solemnly takes the vows of loyalty, then goes out and forgets what manner of man he is!

It is a high goal. Let us keep it ever before us. Let not the saint (we are all saints just as we are sinners, potentially if not actually), let not the saint forget the heights toward which he should climb.

A third thing we must not forget. *Let not America forget the faith of the fathers!* What is the faith of the fathers? Is it Congregationalism planted deep in the rocky soil of New England? Congregationalism which grew out of the adventurous, stern, independent spirit of the Puritans? Or is the faith of the fathers the faith of Roman Catholics, early brought to these shores by Lord Baltimore, who in the soil of Virginia and Maryland sowed the seeds of his allegiance? Or is the faith of the fathers of America the faith of the gentle and peace-loving Quaker, William Penn, who took Christ at his word, who believed in the power of love, who set at the center of community life the ideal of brotherly love, who dealt successfully with hostile Indians on the basis of love and fair play and succeeded where warlike methods of aggression failed? Or is the faith of the fathers the faith of Wesley, warm, earnest,

evangelical, early brought to the colonies, expanding with the expanding life of the young and growing country? No, the faith of the fathers is none of these, yet it is all of them. The faith of the fathers is simply *faith*—faith that steadied the navigators until they found these shores, faith that strengthened the early settlers until they had laid their foundations. Faith that spurred the dreamers on to dare great things for God and humanity. We cannot alter history—"what is written is written"; nor stay the majestic march of God down the centuries; nor change by one hair-breadth the truths and principles which make for greatness and immortality; nor lightly brush aside the hand of God. Therefore, let not America forget the faith of the fathers!

Let not the church forget her supreme object. What is that supreme object? In a word, To lead the people to God. There are sermons and sermons, volumes and volumes in this one brief sentence and I am to devote to it only a paragraph. To lead people to God. Little children—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Broken, sin-tossed men and women. "Jesus stooped and wrote in the sand, then lifted himself and his eyes saw none save the guilty woman—Where are thine

accusers? Does no man condemn thee? Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." Thus was she led to God. It is the true church's nature as well as supreme object to lead people to God. I have read of a captain of a lifeboat on a rockbound coast, and how someone, more for the sake of probing into his motives than for information, asked him: "Why do you risk your life for people whom you have never seen? A wreck occurs on your stretch of the coast. The endangered passengers are complete strangers to you, and probably in some cases they seem hardly worth the saving. Why do you do it?" He was an illiterate man, but he made fine reply: "Oh," he said, "I guess it's our nature." And such should be the nature of the true church—to love people, to lead them to God. That is, to make them conscious of God in them, to give them the experience of God. It is John R. Mott who says that "an alarming weakness among Christians is that we are producing Christian activities faster than we are producing Christian experience and Christian faith." Is he correct? The Christian Church is a beehive of activity; organization, machinery, all of it going—but what are we producing? Are we producing Christian experience and Christian faith? Are we leading people to

God? Are we making them conscious of God in them?

Let not the Christian forget his Christ. It should be said of us as was said of the knights in King Arthur's Court:

> "And like to coins they are, some good, some bad,
> But all stamped with the image of the King."

The finest thing about E. Stanley Jones, a leader among modern missionaries of the cross, is that he never forgets Christ. He says: "Christianity is Christ. I cannot debate, I will not argue, I refuse to philosophize, nor will I theorize, I present to you Christ." And eager multitudes see Christ in him and his words. Do I bear the image of Christ? Christ was syr pathetic. You can be sympathetic. Christ was kind. You can be kind. Rugged but kindly old Alexander Maclaren of Manchester used to say to his people year after year, almost Sunday after Sunday: "Be kind! Everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle. Be kind!" Christ was hopeful. You can impart hope.

> "In hope that sends a shining ray
> Far down the future's broadening way,"

wrote Washington Gladden. You can put that shining ray of hope into life. For Christ is that hope. You can say to the one who stands in the midst of his barren field, disheartened,

defeated, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." Let not the Christian forget his Christ!

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee every question
In the earth and out of it."

X

HUMANITY'S MOST BEAUTIFUL POEM

Everlasting (Mother's) Arms

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.—*Deuteronomy 33. 27.*

Mother's Day! It is not a saints' day, but it is more widely recognized than most saints' days. After all, who are the real saints? Are they those whom the church creates saints by canon law or are they those whose saintliness is wrought out in the refining though ofttimes harsh experiences of life? "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" is the question we ask when we look upon the real saints of life. The answer cannot be mistaken: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Mothers are correctly included in this category, "These are they which came out of great tribulation." That is what makes them saints. Saint Mother. Why not? There is Saint Cecelia, Saint Theresa, Saint Mary, Saint Margaret, Saint Barbara, Saint Jude, Saint Simon, Saint Thomas, Saint Joan of Arc

—it is no disrespect to these to say that one Sunday is set aside for the recognition of a saint, made so by popular decree, swept into the position by an overwhelming vote of millions of sons and daughters—it is Saint Mother's Day.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." This verse divides itself into two parts. First, the eternal God is thy refuge. The great background of life is God. We must start with something, someone, sometime, somewhere—what better beginning, what more logical background than God? Life, faith, confidence, everything has its beginning in God. "In the beginning God"—is the noblest statement of faith, science, literature or the Bible—it is the noblest statement imaginable—"In the beginning God." Now, this eternal God is your refuge. I think of a ship in the grip of a mighty storm at sea; the sea lashed to fury, the ship battling with the wind and waves, and finally fighting its way to a safe harbor. Within the harbor is protection from the storm; there is refuge. Within the harbor the ship drops anchor; all is safe. From the storms of life, from the wreck of sin, from the devastating sorrows of the years there is a haven—the eternal God is thy refuge. The second part is, "Underneath

are the everlasting arms." God works through human agencies. God has a partner, he has many partners—among those partners are mothers. I do no violence to Scripture when I speak of this second part of the text as applying to mothers—"Underneath are the everlasting arms."

Mother's arms *are everlasting* arms. There always have been mother's arms. There always will be mother's arms. Mother's arms are eternal. The first human habitation of which we have any record is the Garden of Eden. Where was the Garden of Eden? We do not know. It does not matter. Enough to know that the Garden of Eden was a home. In that home was a mother. Her name was Eve. The naming of Eve is beautifully told in the Book. We read that "Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." And so, as we walk in the garden in the cool of the day, at the beginning of time, we find a mother. Mother's arms are everlasting arms. They are ever open wide to receive their little ones. One of the records which I enjoy keeping quite as much as any other is the record of babies born within my parish. You have seen them—an altar full of little children in their mothers' and fathers' arms. Now, the final record of a mother's arms

has not yet been written—it will not be written until the end of time. For a mother's arms are everlasting arms. Underneath the great scheme of things, underneath God's plan of creation and continuance of life, underneath the structure of society, underneath the beginning, perpetuity and happiness of the home are the everlasting arms—a mother's arms.

Again, a mother's arms are *ever-living* arms. They give life at the outset, then live on in abiding influence. This was the case with the Hebrew mothers of long ago. When the cruel Egyptian Pharaoh perceived that the children of Israel were becoming too numerous for his people he issued a dastardly decree—that all the male children of the Hebrews should be killed. But those Hebrew mothers circumvented the plans of the Pharaoh and saved their baby sons alive. Checked in this, he ordered that all male children, immediately upon birth, should be cast into the river. Now, there was a Hebrew mother whose fascinating story of the saving of her baby boy has come down through history. Her name was Jochebed. When her boy was born she hid him. Day and night she kept him from the gaze of snooping officials and inquisitive soldiers. Then when she could no longer hide him she made a safe, water-tight little ark, laid her baby boy

therein, and set the ark among the flags by the water's edge. Did she then go away and leave him to a kindly fate? Oh, no. Her arms were everliving arms. She set the baby's older sister to watch—God bless the older sisters, little mothers they are so often called; Miriam was such. Now Jochebed's cleverness led her to place the little ark in the river at the spot to which the Pharaoh's daughter and her maids came down to bathe. Here they come—the Pharaoh's beautiful daughter and her retinue of lovely girls.

"What is that yonder? Go fetch it."

When the maid brought the ark and lifted the cover in the presence of the Pharaoh's daughter there was a baby boy—and the baby was crying. "Dear little babe," said the Pharaoh's daughter.

"Princess, oh, Princess," said Miriam, for the sister's watchful eye had not missed an incident in the progress of this drama, "shall I go and get a nurse for the little babe?"

"Yes, do," replied the Pharaoh's daughter.

Now this was exactly as Jochebed had planned. Miriam ran and secured the babe's own mother for nurse. And the mother's everliving arms were underneath her son.

"Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall:
A mother's secret hope outlives them all."

In the third place, a mother's arms are *everlawabiding* arms. That is, a true mother recognizes the place of discipline in life and in the training of children. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," is an old and fully proven proverb. Do young people sometimes get "out of hands"? Whose fault is it? Not always the fault of the young people. Often it is the fault of the older people who are shamefully negligent in training, discipline, and example. Discipline is at the very heart of all of life. Certainly it is at the heart of our physical life. He who disciplines his body, his eating and drinking, his habits of life, his hours of sleep and exercise, work and play, has a healthy body and leads a happy life. Now, this same discipline is the heart of the home. The longer I live the more I am impressed with the clear statements of both the Old Testament and the New. One of the clearest of these clear statements is the fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Paul, in recalling this commandment in one of his epistles, calls it the first commandment with promise. He might have said the *only* commandment with promise. One of the greatest mothers of history

was Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley. She had a large family—nineteen children, two of whom, John and Charles, are famed beyond the names of kings and princes. Now, the greatness of Susannah Wesley was not in the size of her family—though that is marvel enough in this day and generation—nor how she managed to feed and clothe that numerous brood on a village parson's income; the greatness is the manner in which she brought up her children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." There was discipline in that home. The organizing, disciplining genius of John Wesley he received not from his father but from his mother. Underneath his life were a mother's ever-lawabiding arms.

Again, a mother's arms are *ever-loving* arms. William E. Barton tells us that the bed where Nancy Lincoln lay with her baby boy when he was born had one leg, driven in the earthen floor, with a side-rail running to the wall on one side, and a foot-rail running at right angles to the other wall. The bed was probably not uncomfortable. There was likely a feather bed on top of the straw or husk mattress, and homespun covers and blankets. Doubtless there was a bearskin on the floor, upon which two-year-old Sarah played. They

had wanted a boy at first—they had a name for him. So when the boy actually came the name was ready, had been ready these two years—Abraham. It was nine years later that this same mother, now on the frontiers of Indiana, called her two children to her bedside—for she was very sick and knew she could not live long—and little Abe and Sarah stood by the bed while the mother put her hand on Abe's head and told him to be kind to his sister and father, to be good to one another, to love their kindred and worship God. In death, as in life, her ever-loving arms were underneath her children, for that boy later testified, "All that I am I owe to my mother." Among the letters of Grover Cleveland is one written on the eve of his election to the governorship of New York State to his brother: "I have just voted," he wrote, "and I sit here in the office alone. If mother were alive, I should be writing to her, and I feel as if it were time for me to write to someone who will believe me. Do you know that if mother were alive I should feel so much safer. I have always thought her prayers had much to do with my successes." Underneath him, through his mistakes as well as through his successes, were a mother's ever-loving arms. An ideal mother and mother-in-law is found in

the ancient name Naomi. Underneath her sons and her daughters-in-law were her ever-loving arms.

There is one final quality of mother's arms —they are *ever-lifting* arms. They are arms that lift up the child to God in prayer. Before the child is born it is dedicated to the Lord. Hannah was such a mother. When her child was born she named him Samuel. Why Samuel? Because she had already talked with God about him. Then, a little later, she brought him to the Temple, with her sacrifice, according to the custom of her people. There in the Temple of her fathers she held her child up before the priest Eli, saying, "I lend him to the Lord, as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord." Oh blessed, ever-lifting arms. Monica was a mother with ever-lifting arms. Augustine, in his confessions, tells of his long, weary climb through indifference, unbelief, and disobedience until he found Christ and was ready for God's will in his life. After his baptism as a Christian he had many pleasant days with his mother, talking together of his experience and his future plans. One starlit night, as they sat together, she said to him: "Son, I have no more to live for. For years I have been praying that you might become a Christian. Now my prayers are answered." Through

thirty years of his checkered youth Monica's ever-lifting arms had not grown tired—she held her son up to the throne until her prayer was answered. O mother, be not discouraged, your ever-lifting prayers will yet be answered. Mary was such a mother. For we cannot think of even Jesus, the Son of God, without thinking of Mary, his mother, and her ever-lifting arms. "She brought forth her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." Then, when the time arrived, she carried him to the Temple and lifted him there in dedication to God. There was an old man present that day who was so impressed with what he saw that he said of the Babe, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." For Mary's ever-lifting arms upheld the Son of God.

Everlasting,
Ever-living,
Ever-lawabiding,
Ever-loving,
Ever-lifting arms—mothers' arms.

There are exceptions. Revelation contains the vividly awful picture of "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots." But the exceptions prove the rule of true motherhood. It is Christian motherhood that is exalted on

Saint Mother's Day. It is Christian motherhood to which every patriotic, true mother aspires.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are mother's arms. God is no less God because he works through human agencies. He draws near to us in the flesh of his only-begotten Son; he softly and sweetly ministers to us in the daily presence of true motherhood.

XI

THE POEM HAS RELATIVES

I Have Five Brothers

I have five brothers.—*Luke 16. 28.*

There are five truths growing out of this parable, and these five truths, these five brothers, I desire to introduce to you. I will introduce the first brother. His name is *Inequality*. There was a wide inequality in the positions of Dives and Lazarus. Dives—rich, faring sumptuously, surrounded by enervating comforts, waited upon, kowtowed to; Lazarus—poor, starving, sick, with no friends save the dogs of the street. Life is full of inequalities. Buckingham Palace and Hell's Kitchen are not far apart; one may walk from one to the other. Fifth Avenue is only a step from Fourth Avenue, measured by city blocks. The upper West Side and the lower East Side are within the same city limits—located geographically. The inequalities of life are not only material, they are moral as well. Good men and bad men live in the same city block. Lawabiding and law-evading citizens trade back and forth, and converse one with another. Women of refinement and women lacking the expected

qualities of womanhood are side by side in the assemblies of our city life. There are also the inequalities that are physical. There are people who are always well and strong, whose years of life have been years of perfect health; on the other hand, there is a vast number of people who are always ill, whose life has been a fight with sickness, or some bodily deformity; who have carried most of their days their "thorn in the flesh." However, the chief inequalities of life are not material, nor moral, nor physical—they are spiritual. The essential difference between Dives and Lazarus was not that Dives was rich and Lazarus poor; was not that one or the other possessed or lacked certain moral qualities; was not that Dives was physically a well man, while Lazarus was a sick man, covered with sores. The essential difference was in their hearts. Dives was a hard-hearted, self-righteous man, a man who trusted in his riches and forgot God and God's children. Lazarus had a heart of sympathy, a heart that believed in God. Now, the problem of life's inequalities is not going to be solved by a vast leveling process. We are not going to solve the problem of material inequality by taking all the wealth of the world and parceling it out in equal divisions among all the inhabitants, an equal share to each individual,

regardless of needs or qualifications. Nor are we going to solve the problem of moral inequality by taking some of the virtues of the good people and bestowing them on the bad people, and taking some of the vices of the bad people and loading them onto the saints. Nor can we solve the problem of physical inequality by taking all the well people and visiting upon them some of the handicaps and diseases of the sick. No, we must go deeper than that—we must submit ourselves to the treatment prescribed by Ezekiel when he says: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." There was Quintin Hogg, founder of the London Polytechnic, the son of wealth and position, educated at Eton—he might have been a Dives, squandering his young life in arrogant idleness and ease. But God had given him a new heart and there arose the Polytechnic to lift the level of the upreaching ragged boys of a great city. Even so God smooths out the rough places of life by taking our heart of stone and giving us a heart of love.

There is a second brother I must introduce to you: his name is *Death.* He really has a longer name, his full name is—*Death Does Not*

End All. In this parable Jesus—remember it is Jesus who is speaking—Jesus lifts the curtain and gives us a glimpse into the life beyond the grave. There we see Dives suffering for his evil, while Lazarus is rejoicing in paradise. This parable tells us that Dives was not in torment because he was rich but because he had a heart of stone; is there any sin more repulsive than hard-heartedness? And Lazarus was in paradise not because he was poor but because he had a heart that beat in tune with the heart of the Infinite. There is no virtue in what a man has; there is virtue solely in what a man is. This parable also tells me that *what I am to be I am now becoming.* What I was as a boy I am now as a man. What I am now as a man fixes the trend of my soul's career forever. God did not send Dives to the place of torment; Dives sent himself there. God did not put Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; Lazarus himself climbed to that place of joyous satisfaction. "If a man die, shall he live again?" asked Job. Jesus and this parable answer unequivocally, "*Yes.*"

A third brother speaks to us: his name is *Personality.* "I have five *brothers,*" said Dives. He did not say: "I have a fine mansion back on earth. Let me return and see that everything is in excellent shape about the house and

grounds; I spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in building that mansion, and furnishing it with furniture appropriate to so rich a place." Nor did he say: "I have a great business enterprise back on earth, and I must return to look after that. I am not sure about the ability of the men who succeeded in the control, and I am greatly concerned; let me return to investigate." No; far from any such suggestion was Dives' plea. "I have five *brothers*," he said. "Brothers, flesh and blood, my own kin, personalities are they; I want to talk with them; I desire to warn them; I know some things now that would guide them." The most valuable thing in the world is an individual. We are glad when a coal strike is avoided, not because it stimulates our industries, and pours a great stream of money into the commercial life of the nation, saving many a lesser business from bankruptcy—that enters into our joy; but chiefly we are glad because it brings relief to countless individuals, homes that would have been cold and cheerless, and children who have been hungry are saved. The crime that we look upon as the most terrible is the crime that takes an individual human life. Business is conducted on the basis of service to the individual. If there were no individuals or individual needs there

would be no business. Every institution is simply a company of like-minded individuals. A certain number of individuals band together and say, "We will form a club; here are our officers, bylaws, dues, and program; and this is our clubhouse." What is the Church of Christ but a company of individuals, seeking the way of life? Not alone in our temporal affairs of business, government, and society do we build around the individual, but God does also. The most valuable thing in the sight of God is an individual soul. God did not give his Son to save a planet from destruction, nor to rescue a planet that had been deflected from its orbit, nor to bring back a wandering star, but "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And that Son whom God the Father sent said, "It is not the will of your Father . . . that *one* of these little ones should perish."

There is a fourth brother in this group: his name is *Individual Responsibility*. "I have five brothers," said Dives; "I am concerned about them." The genius of the gospel is the responsibility it lays upon the individual. In the light of this truth read the first chapter of John. John said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Two men heard him speak and followed Jesus. One of the two was Andrew; he had a brother named Simon Peter; the first thing he did was to find his brother. And he brought him to Jesus. The very next day Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me." Philip at once sought out Nathanael. So the gospel was promulgated. So the Christian Church began. So the glorious church continues to this day, built upon the foundation of a sense of responsibility in the hearts of individuals. I would rather have five hundred individuals every week telling about their church than five hundred dollars' worth of advertising space in the Saturday's newspapers. "I have five brothers," Dives said. Only he said it too late. He had sinned away his day of opportunity. It was too late for Dives. But it is not too late for you. You have five brothers, if not brothers of the flesh then brothers in the spirit, or sisters, to whom you may still say, "We have a wonderful Bible class in our church; won't you come and join us? You will be enlightened by the instruction you will receive from the Word of God." Or, "We have a church, the church that stands in this city as the Body of Christ; won't you come and unite with our church; it is the open testimony of your allegiance to Christ." Individual responsibility—

"I am only one,
But I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But I can do something,
What I can do
I ought to do,
And what I ought to do
By the grace of God I will do."

"I have *five* brothers," said Dives. I will now introduce the fifth to you: his name is *Efficacy*. His name is really longer, his whole name is *the Efficacy of the Ordinary, and the Inefficacy of the Extraordinary*. Dives begged Abraham to permit Lazarus to return to earth to warn his brothers. Abraham replied, "They have the ordinary means, Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

"They will not hear them," said Dives, "but should one rise from the dead they will hear him."

"No," replied Abraham—and in this he showed his great wisdom—"if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." If one is not moved by the ordinary methods of approach and appeal, the chances are that the extraordinary measures taken will likewise fall on deaf ears. We are like Dives—we cry out for something unusual: "Send us a miracle," we pray, "send us a great upheaval; sweep us

off our feet with a tornado-like revival." And to our prayer I hear a soft but firm voice reply: "You have your Bible, you have the preached Word, you have your churches, your hours of prayer and praise. Give heed to them."

"No, no," we cry, "these have outlived their usefulness; send us Saint Paul to thunder in the streets of our cities."

Again the soft, firm voice speaks: "If they do not observe the ordinary means of grace, neither will they be persuaded should a Saint Paul thunder in your streets." *Means of grace.* I thank God for this fine old phrase. I thank God for the *ordinary means of grace:* I pray that we may be big enough to see them and strong-willed enough to use them.

XII

THE POEM AS A CONVERSATIONALIST

A Heartening Dialogue

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.—*Romans 8. 28.*

This is one of the "hard sayings" of Scripture. Bishop Brent, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination as a bishop, preached an anniversary sermon in which he made a statement of what might be called his estimate of the world and his own faith as he looked out, from the vantage point of experience and ripened maturity, upon that world. Among other things he said this: "The thing that is most difficult for me to understand is the love and Fatherly goodness of God." We all, if we are honest, sympathize with him in that statement. We live in a world full of mystery and darkness, sorrow and pain, failure and loss, frustrated plans and unfulfilled hopes, and it is indeed hard to understand. A few months ago Dr. W. F. Campbell, an authority on cancer, died from the disease. Cancer is responsible for the death of many physicians. Statistics tell us that one eighth of all deaths

of men fifty-five years of age or more, and one fifth of all deaths of women over forty-five years of age, are due to cancer. Cancer is not contagious. Nor, in certain stages, is it incurable. But it is baffling. All in all, it is probably the most baffling disease facing the physicians to-day. And what cancer is to the world of medicine this statement of the text is to the world of experience: it is a baffling saying—that all things work together for good.

But the saying stands. We will take it as it stands. We will not mutilate it, we will not try to explain it, we will simply take it as it is. Let us look upon this verse as a Dialogue. That is, I imagine I am having a conversation with a man whom we shall name Mr. Truth Seeker. In the course of the conversation we come upon the problem of the baffling experiences of life, life's pain and sorrow, its inexplicable mysteries. I make bold to quote, by way of comfort and assurance, "But, Truth Seeker, you know that all things work together for good."

"Just a moment," he counters. "I cannot agree with that. I am willing to admit that *some* things work together for good but not all,"

"Give me an example," I ask.

"Well," he replies, "take the suffering of little children. Think of the number of little

children who, through no fault of their own, must suffer with cold and hunger, must go into life with less than half a chance."

"I do not know that I can answer your question, Truth Seeker, but do you remember Robert Louis Stevenson's book, *Notes on Edinburgh?* In it he gives this picture: 'One shivering evening, cold enough for a frost, but with too high a wind, just a little past sundown, when the lamps were beginning to enlarge their circles in the growing dusk, I saw two lassies, one about nine, the other about seven, barefooted, coming eastward in the wind. They were miserably clad, and the pavement so cold you would have thought no one could lay a naked foot on it unflinchingly. But on they came, waltzing along, the older one singing a tune as they came. My own heart was full of bitterness, but that sight reproved me and I pocketed my bitterness.' Truth Seeker, that does not answer your question; it is simply a little side light upon the question which you raise; but, tell me, Truth Seeker, is it not true that children suffer more from having too much rather than too little? Look back upon your own childhood. Did more good come out of the things of which you were deprived or of the unnecessary things, luxuries, that were given you?"

"I will go a step further," says Truth Seeker. "I will admit that *most things* work together for good, but not all. For example, take war, pestilence, crime, plague, devastating storms—what possible good can there be in such things? None whatever. War—a civilized word for brutal murder; patriotism to your own country, simply a respectable term for cultivated hatred of another nation; diplomacy, the polite name for deliberate lying—what good is there in war?"

"Truth Seeker, I agree with you, but here is this little point: The other day I had a funeral of a soldier; he was a veteran of the Civil War. His comrades were there, a few of them—there are only a few left. With feeble voices, but with the unmistakable ring of affection, they recalled the scenes of the camp, the march, the hardship and peril—and they looked forward to pitching their tents, with him, on the eternal camping ground. Such memories do not excuse war, and this does not answer your question, Truth Seeker, but even war has its bright side, and good may come out of war, brutal and inhuman though it be."

"That does not convince me," says Truth Seeker. "Most things may work together for good, but you can never make me believe that *all things* do."

"You misunderstand me, Truth Seeker; I am not trying to argue you into the acceptance of this statement. Little good was ever done by mere argument. I am simply calling your attention to the word used in the Book—it is not the word 'some,' nor 'most,' but *all* things. Yet there is a more important word than the word 'all'; it is the word or phrase—*working together.* Life must be viewed in its entirety. You cannot take an isolated incident in history and judge all history by that one incident. You cannot take the Battle of Château Thierry or the sinking of the Lusitania and judge the whole World War and subsequent history by those two incidents. If I wanted to, I could prove to you that good came out of the sinking of the Lusitania, fiendish as was the act. Nor can you take a single incident in the experience of an individual life and pass judgment upon all of life by that one incident. Here, Truth Seeker, is something I want you to see. Look at it. It is an old prison door. See how thick it is, how heavy the timbers. Look at these huge iron hinges; it would require the miracle of an earthquake to wrest that door from its hinges. And note this tiny opening, about a foot and a half square; see these great iron bars, criss-crossing—could anyone ever hope for freedom

who was confined behind that prison door? But behind that very door, Truth Seeker, a good man was imprisoned for twelve years. He had not robbed anyone, he had not assaulted anyone, he was true to his home, to his family, a man of high intelligence and moral rectitude, but he was thrust into prison and kept there for twelve years; you wonder what good could come from such an experience. I will tell you—the good of the greatest book that was ever written, next to the Bible—Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The secret was that in John Bunyan's experience he allowed things, good and evil, to work together. Now, Truth Seeker, be honest, you say you are honest in your thinking—tell me—are you allowing *all* things in your experience to work together, or are you rebellious, picking out single incidents as you choose, saying, 'There is no good in this,' and 'This is all evil?' Working together—this is the secret. Down yonder they are putting up a structure of re-enforced concrete. Steel, sand, water, stone, cement enter into the making of the structure. No one element alone would answer, but, working together, a solid, beautiful building slowly rises to grace the street. The happiness of life depends so much upon making things work together. One may sit down

at this organ console, turn on the power, press all the stops, then come down on the foot pedals with both feet and hands and arms upon every note that could be touched—and you would jump from your seat because of the discord and jarring sound. Yet the same sounds are there as when one moves his fingers over the keys according to the notes on the sheet of music. The difference is that in one case the notes are working together, in the other they are fighting one another. Much of the unhappiness of life comes because we refuse to let things work together; our life is a confusion of automobiles, money, pleasure, movies, excursions, running about, a little church thrown in at Easter and Christmas, a little religion at weddings and funerals; but life is a jarring noise and discord because we do not let things work together. Have you the courage, the self-control, the grace to go out into this week and make all things *work together?*"

"I admit your point," says Truth Seeker. "We do not let things work together; if we did, we would be happier, I can see that, but what really troubles me is the word 'good.' What is good anyhow?"

"Now you have hit the nail on the head, Truth Seeker. The word 'good' is the central

word in this statement. All things work together for *good*. What is good? Here are some young people who are going out to an evening party. We call to them as they go, 'Good-by. I hope you have a good time.' What do we mean? We mean we hope they will have a happy time. This is well, for of all periods that should be happy youth is that period. Some friends are leaving for extended travel. Ere they are off we felicitate them, saying, 'May you have a good trip,' meaning, 'May your trip be pleasant, free from undue annoyances and sickness.' Of another man we say, 'He has made good.' We mean he has achieved success in his chosen business or profession. He has made good. Are these the true meanings of 'good'? Does 'good' mean a happy time for young people out for an evening of fun; does 'good' mean a pleasant trip for travelers and voyagers; does 'good' mean success, professional or business success? That is one meaning, but that is not the real meaning. The real meaning of 'good' is 'completion.' Is life completed when youth has been made happy? Is longing completed when one has had a pleasant, long-looked-for journey? Is ambition completed when one has been successful? Here we are in an orchard. It is autumn, the time of harvest. We stand

at the edge of the orchard and look down the long rows of trees, so carefully planted. We walk beneath the trees; they are peach trees. The trees are loaded with ripe peaches. What richer-looking fruit than peaches that are ripe! We reach up and pick a perfect specimen from the low-bending branch. Sinking our teeth into it, we remark, 'This is a good peach.' What do we mean? We mean that it is ripe, that it is completed fruit. All fruit that is good fruit is completed fruit. Not green, not undersized, nor undernourished. Holding this fruit in the hand, we ask, 'What entered into the completion of this peach?' Sunshine. Yes, sunshine, but not sunshine alone. Clouds, darkness, rain, storm, wind, cool nights and hot days. Life follows the same laws, be it in the orchard or the street. A good life, completed life, grows not in the sunshine alone.

"Truth Seeker, do you remember the words of old Socrates? In prison, offered escape from prison, he refused, saying, 'No evil can befall a good man.' That is a bold statement for a man who was not a Christian to make; there are no reservations, no 'ifs' and no 'buts'; he simply says, 'No evil can befall a good man.'"

"Oh, I wish I could believe it," says Truth Seeker. "But it is hard, so hard. I know a

good woman; she was prostrated by grief; she was never the same after that. I know a man, he was a good man, and he was crushed by hardship; he never rose above that calamity. I wish I could believe it."

"Truth Seeker, are you forgetting that 'good' means 'completion'? Were these of whom you speak completed lives? It is possible that some lives will not be completed until 'the day dawn and the shadows fly away.' Can't you stand at least with Socrates and say, 'No evil can befall a good man'? But there is higher ground. Truth Seeker, I call you to higher ground. I call you to face these two inescapable questions: Do you love God? Do you have a godly purpose? All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose. First, Do you love God? That is the test. That changes all life. The love of God shed abroad in a human heart. There was George Matheson. As a young man, with a brilliant career opening up before him, a career in which he needed, next to his good brain, good eyes, he faced at the outset of his career total blindness. Total blindness came—and after blindness other dark experiences. He walked literally through the valley of the shadow—what kept him? The love of God? No. His

love for God. That sustained him. Years later, as a sort of poetical creed, he wrote, 'O love that wilt not let me go!' What love was that? God's love, of course, but it was God's love in his heart. God's love to him and his love to God. All things work together for good to them that love God. I do not like abstractions. All the time my mind is drawn, as by a magnet, to concrete cases and incidents. I have been trying to summon up before me those men and women I know who love God, and they pass before me, a noble procession, and I can say of them all, in very truth and conscience—All things work together for good to them. Here is a second question: Do you have a godly purpose? All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose. George A. Gordon, of Old South Church, Boston, closes his remarkable autobiography with a chapter entitled 'Prospice.' The word means, of course, 'looking forward,' and that is what he does. He begins by telling of a kinswoman, a woman much younger than he, from whom he had received a letter in which she said that she had nothing to look forward to but death. George Gordon remarks, 'That seems to me to be a deplorable and wholly unnecessary state of mind for a healthy human

being at any age.' So it is. It is the state of mind of a purposeless life, a life without a godly purpose. Such is not Gordon's conclusion. His answer is, 'The night, with its conflict, its tears and blood, is past; the great answer is at hand; morning is come.'

'The final word, however, Truth Seeker, of this verse is not at the end but at the beginning—it is the word 'know.' 'We *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' Paul closes his thought, a few verses later, with the same assurance, 'I am persuaded; he says, 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, . . . nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ.' Assurance is a great thing. It is half the battle for you to be able to face the day saying, I know all that happens to-day will work together for good. It is audacious, but it is the undisputed call of this text. Will you reach out with your strong right arm and grasp this truth in your hand and go out into this week saying, I *know* that all things will work together for good, because I love God, because I am determined to fulfill his purpose?

"Truth Seeker, can you say with the good old Quaker poet:

'I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

. . . . . .

'I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise;
I only know that life and death
His mercy underlies.'"

"Good-by, Truth Seeker. God bless you and bring us all to the truth.

XIII

THE POEM'S MAGIC WORD

YET!

Yet.—*Many Places.*

IN conversation and writing the chief use of the word "yet" is as a connecting word. But in meaning and reality it has a more significant use than continuing a thought or uniting two sentences. Illustrations for this contention regarding the word "yet" are not from the book of grammar but from the Book of Life. "Though he slay me, *yet* will I trust him." It was Job who said this. Forsaken by his friends, his cry apparently disregarded by God, to the false accusations of his false friends he lifted up his voice and cried the cry of ultimate confidence—"Though he slay me, *yet* will I trust him." "I have been young, and now am old; *yet* have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." This is the voice of David. He spoke out of a full experience. This is not merely a beautiful phrase, it is a boundless promise, whose significance hinges upon this little word "yet." "I have been young, and now am old; *yet*

have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, *yet* shall he live." Whose voice is this? It is none other than the voice of Jesus, speaking his word of comfort to Mary and Martha over the loss of their brother. If I have spoken this word once I have spoken it a thousand times in my ministry; in the home of sorrow and in that dear spot we call God's Acre—"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, *yet* shall he live." "If a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." This is an old man writing to a young man. The older man, Paul, has been through the mill; he is jealous, unselfishly jealous for the success and happiness of the younger man, Timothy. He knows the pitfalls, the temptations to easy success by the easy way; therefore he says—and the emphasis here is on the little word "yet"—"If a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet* without sin." This sounds as though it might have been written for the confused days in which you and I live—

"Tempted in all points like as we are, *yet* without sin." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; *yet* not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This again is the voice of Paul. He is relating his experience. He is reliving the Damascus highway event, when all life was changed, for from that hour he was able to say, "I live, *yet* not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Such is the use and power of this little word "*yet*." It is a bridge over which we pass from the land of despair to the world of hope, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City; it is the bridge that spans the chasm between human need and divine power. Let us build this bridge in our own lives to-day! There are six piers to this great—I was about to say international—Peace Bridge, but we must have a greater name than either of these—let us call it the *redemption* Bridge. We do not use this word "redemption" as much as we should. It is by no means a limited word; it is limitless. It is the response of God to a needy world; the reply of Christ to eager, upreaching humanity. Therefore we shall call our bridge the Redemption Bridge, and we shall erect the piers one by one.

First, I have done wrong, YET *God forgives me. He matches my recreancy with his faithfulness.* There is a bit of dry humor but more of truth in the reply of one man who was asked, "What church do you belong to?" He said, "I do not know the name of it, but it is that church where they pray, 'We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us.'" We all belong to that church. There is hope for the man who acknowledges his recreancy; there is little hope for the one who pridefully prays, "I pay tithe, I fast, I am not as other men are, and I thank thee, Lord; I have done no wrong." Now, whenever I think of God's faithfulness I think of the soil, seed, and the harvest. I think of that greatest army in all the world, the army of agriculturists, of gardeners, who go out every spring with their implements of toil to stir up the soil for the feeding of a hungry world. I think of Millet's "Sower," striding across the field, his bag of seed slung from his shoulder, scattering the seed in the upturned earth. Why does he do that? Because he knows that God is faithful, and that harvest will follow seedtime as day follows night. Listen: "He is faithful that promised." What is the promise?—"I will forgive their iniquity,

and I will remember their sin no more." This is the first pier of the great bridge Redemption. Thank God that this pier rises strong and steadfast above the rushing waters.

Now let us build our second pier. It is this: *I have failed,* YET *failure is not a permanent state; it is only an incident.* Phillips Brooks failed as a teacher. He was keenly aware of that failure, but he was able to grip himself and turn his attention to something else; the failure was only an incident, a stepping-stone upon which he rose to wide usefulness and success. Up to a certain point in his life Joseph was anything but a success. In his relationship with his brothers, down there in the pit, sold into Egyptian slavery, thrust into prison and falsely accused—there is but one word that fitly describes his career thus far; that word you may print in huge letters; that one word is FAILURE. But, by the grace of God, and it was the grace of God in his heart, failure was only an incident; it was only a passing phase of his unselfish and helpful life; he rose above his failure. Now, then, look at Jesus himself. What would Pilate have answered to your question, "What of Jesus' life?" "Failure." Ask the disciples in those uncertain days which followed the crucifixion —"What of Jesus' life?" They would have

answered, as two of them did answer, "Failure. We had trusted that it would have been he which should have delivered Israel." Even the cross, tragic as it is, is only an incident. God is greater than the cross, greater than any cross, greater than your cross, and he enables you to say: "I have failed, *yet* failure is not a permanent state; it is only an incident. I shall rise above my failure."

There is a third pier to our bridge Redemption, namely, *I am tempted,* YET *temptation does not mean "sin."* There is a distinction between temptation and sin, a distinction which young people and sensitive souls particularly need to make. Temptation is not sin. It is harboring temptation, encouraging it, yielding to temptation that is sin. I will illustrate it in this way: Here is this bowl of beautiful flowers. The bowl is full, nearly to the rim, with water. In the water is a wire network, weighted down with an iron, the stems of the flowers standing in the wire netting. As long as I let the bowl and stand alone they are all right. But let me push the stand heavily with my hand and over it would go, crashing to the floor, wetting the carpet, spilling those lovely flowers. Such is—meanly stated—the distinction between temptation and sin. Let temptation alone and that is all it amounts to; push it over and there is a

crash—it becomes sin. There are certain laws of the moral life which are perfectly harmless if we let them alone; break them, and havoc results. Are young people to-day subjected to greater temptation than the young people of our or of an older generation? I should say Yes. For the more complex life becomes the greater the temptation and the strain. Do you blame young people for some of the things they are doing? Blame the older people. It is the older people who write the books they should not read, create the plays and the films they should not see, invent the dances they should not dance, and profit from the resorts that are gateways to hell. For all that, I know young people as well as older people who have put down this pier of the bridge Redemption: "I am tempted, *yet* temptation does not mean sin; I need not yield."

We are now out beyond the middle of the stream as we sink our fourth pier. It is, *I have problems,* YET *I also have help.* One of the really great books of the day is an autobiography by Michael Pupin, the head of the department of Electro-Mechanics of Columbia University, a man of science, also a man of faith. The book has run through nine editions although it made its appearance first in 1923. It is called *From Immigrant to Inventor.* What

is it? Why, it is simply the story of many an immigrant and many an American lad, the story of problems, and solving those problems. Michael Pupin had five cents when he landed at Castle Garden years ago, a green Serbian lad. He spent that five cents for a piece of prune pie, which was a bogus prune pie, for it contained nothing but pits of prunes. In his opening paragraph he says it would have been the same had he possessed five hundred dollars instead of five cents, for a young immigrant does not really get his start until he has spent all he has brought with him. It would have taken a little longer to spend the five hundred dollars, but in all probability it would have been spent mostly upon bogus things. It is a far cry from Castle Garden, a fifteen-year-old Serbian lad, alone, with only five cents, and that five cents soon spent for a bogus prune pie, to those days when medals and prizes were handed him for deeds done, for inventions which serve the human race, and those medals received with true humility—from that immigrant lad to this achieving man is a far cry, and all the way between, problems, problems as thick as the trees in a virgin forest. But he found help, and not all his help was in the laboratory; he recognized and drew upon the help that comes from above.

You have your problems. Yes, and you have help, help within, and help above. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!"

There is a fifth pier to our bridge. Let us build it. It is near the other side of the river. There the waters are calmer; it is not as difficult to sink the foundations of this pier. This is it: *I shall die,* YET *life goes on.* This is no morbid thought; it is the most joyous, the most glorious thought imaginable. It is joyous because of the day of days, Easter; it is glorious because of the Christ of that day, the risen Christ. When Rufus Choate, one of the greatest of the long line of great New England statesmen, took ship for Europe in search of health, a friend said to him as he said good-by at the ship, "You will be here one year hence," meaning that in a year his quest for rest and health would have been completed and successful and that he would be again among his friends as buoyant as ever. But Rufus Choate took another meaning, for he answered, "I shall be here one year hence, a hundred years hence, and a thousand years hence." In a few days the great lawyer was dead, having landed at Halifax unable to continue his voyage. He might have said, "I

shall die, but life goes on." So I can put into the lips of that young man who is simply waiting; who calmly said, "They say tuberculosis takes one either in the spring or the fall; it looks as though it would be the spring with me." He can say—he does say—"I shall die *yet* life goes on." Oh, this is a noble pier; there it stands so proud and strong just above the river—"I shall die, *yet* life goes on."

Now, let us build our sixth pier, the last one. What is it? Well, what could it be but this: "*I live,* YET *not I, but Christ liveth in me*"? Dwight L. Moody was a good judge of character, and it was Dwight L. Moody who said of Henry Drummond, "He was the most Christlike man I ever knew." Why could he say that? Because Henry Drummond himself said, every morning and every evening, "I live, *yet* not I, but Christ liveth in me." Henry M. Stanley testifies that what made him a Christian was David Livingstone. And what was it in Livingstone that won Stanley? What but Christ. Because Livingstone said in England or in Africa, "I live, *yet* not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the *summum bonum* of all experience, the goal to be attained by every one of us—"I live, *yet* not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Here are the piers of the bridge Redemption; look upon them as you have built them:

I have done wrong, *yet* God forgives me.

I have failed, *yet* failure is not a permanent state; it is only an incident.

I am tempted, *yet* temptation does not mean sin; I need not yield.

I have problems, *yet* I also have help.

I shall die, *yet* life goes on.

"I live, *yet* not I, but Christ liveth in me."

These are the piers. To have only piers does not make a bridge. The piers must be spanned. There must be a solid roadway above the swirling waters, from pier to pier. We span these piers, from shore to shore, with one brief but confident sentence—

God
in whom we live,
and move,
and have our being.

XIV

THE POEM AFLAME

Two Three-Branched Candelabras

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—*Psalm 91. 1.*

"Whatever temple science may build," someone has said, "there will always need to be hard by a Gothic chapel for wounded souls." Here is that Gothic chapel for wounded souls: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." My faith tells me that the Gothic chapel for wounded souls may be found anywhere. It is not a spot of earth, but a state of mind. David Livingstone found it in the heart of darkest Africa. Charles George Gordon found it on the burning sands of the Sahara Desert. John G. Paton found it among the cannibals of savage isles. Wilfred Grenfell found it in the ice and snow of Labrador. William Rainsford found it in the crowded downtown of greater New York. And you may find it wherever you go—its doors open, its windows radiant, its music softly penetrating your inmost being; you may find

it or you may carry it with you, this Gothic chapel for wounded souls—"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The initial thought in this verse is the thought of partnership. Is not all of life very largely a matter of partnership? Life had its inception in a partnership. A crude statement of that perfect picture in Genesis is this—God said to man: "Here is the earth. I will furnish the soil, you will furnish the toil. Working together we shall subdue the earth, and you shall live and grow thereby." Our human relations are a partnership. Marriage is a partnership. Viewed cold-bloodedly, that is all marriage is. Many a firm goes bankrupt because one or both partners fail to live up to the agreement. Parenthood and childhood is a partnership. The parent says, or should say, "I will furnish food, shelter, clothing, example, for a period of years, and you will furnish obedience." Friendship is a partnership; it is an agreement of confidence. Now, here is a partnership between man and God. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High"—that is man's part; "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"—that is God's side. He who wills to dwell in the presence of God shall be kept in his love and care.

Note how God's side of the partnership, his obligation, is a bit stronger than man's. "He that dwelleth" is a strong phrase, but "shall abide" is stronger. "In the secret place" is good, but "under the shadow" is better. "Of the most High"—what can be stronger than that? What but this, "the Almighty"? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Now, I see in this Gothic chapel for wounded souls two candelabras, with three branches of light, three burning candles to each candelabra. Look upon the first of these candelabras, with its three luminous candles. The first candle tells of *life's good habits*. He that dwelleth, shall abide, that is habit, is it not? The routine of your daily life is dictated by habit. From morning till evening your actions follow in the groove of habit. You men rise in the morning and shave. You use a certain type of razor, you cannot shave comfortably with any other, for that is the kind you have always used. You come down to breakfast. You sit in a certain place. Not that it is any better than another place, but it has been the habit of years to sit right there. You have a regular order about your breakfast; you seldom vary from specified dishes; they must be placed

just so; you have your coffee with your breakfast, not after; there is a certain type of spoon you use for your cereal; if, inadvertently, another is laid at your place, the meal doesn't seem quite right. It is habit, and all day of every day follows that groove. Likewise our spiritual life is a matter of habit. I like that fortunate phrase which Henry Drummond coined and gave to the book which made him famous, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World.* Our spiritual life is governed by natural laws. Habit is one of those natural laws. If you say your prayers (alas! most of us *say* our prayers rather than pray, but it is better to *say* one's prayers than not to pray at all)—if you say your prayers at night, or if you breathe a prayer as you leave your house in the morning, or if you go to the house of God for prayer on Sunday with regularity, it is a matter of habit. Habit puts the mark of dependableness upon our spiritual life. He that dwelleth shall abide. Life's good habits is the first burning candle.

The second burning candle is *life's hidden power.* The secret place, under the shadow, there is power. Zechariah, an ancient prophet, caught the vision of life's hidden power, when he heard the voice that said to him, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith

the Lord." This electric light says, "Not by might, nor by power." Did you ever hear electricity? Jesus, one day, said to his disciples when they urged him to eat, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." He spoke of life's hidden power. Five hundred years ago Thomas à Kempis found in those dark years life's hidden power. He begins one of his chapters with this sentence: "The life of a good religious person ought to be adorned with all virtues; that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason there ought to be much more within than is perceived without." That is, there should be in the hidden places a surplus of power, a reserve of strength and fortitude. I wish each of us could truly say as an Indian Christian said, for it was Ellen Lakshmi Goreh, a Hindu convert, who found in "the secret of his presence" her reserve of power.

The third lighted candle is *life's dependable background*, the place of the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty. I do not know how it is with you, though I presume our experience is similar, but there come times when I am filled with grave doubts, when I question regarding our age, our boasted civilization, and our ability or desire to make a better world out of the wreck of things. When one war

follows hard upon the heels of another, with no apparent desire to stop the curse of the centuries; when I see hatred and bloodshed, murder and lust, distrust of one another and needless crushing rivalries in every avenue of life—when I see such things, my spirit is overwhelmed within me and I am tempted to cry, "What's the use anyway!" But such moments are only occasional and fleeting. My faith has never yet completely broken down. For I am able to look beyond the turmoil to life's dependable background, the Most High, the Almighty. The psalmist has a satisfying statement. It is, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." He does not say that he saw; he believed to see; he was sure that if he kept right on looking, he would some day surely see. He had found life's dependable background, the place of the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty.

Now, will you look for a moment upon the second three-branched candlestick? Here we see, first of all, *constancy without stagnation.* Abiding, dwelling, yes, but you cannot think of him as standing still. Life is progress. From the first word of creation until now progress has been God's order. So it will be for all time to come. Truth will not permit us

to think of eternity apart from progress. Life does not stand still. It is death that is static. Progress does not mean that we forsake the "ancient landmarks." No, they stand, but they may be seen in a new light. Truth does not change. Truth is ever the same, but the application of truth may change. If Jesus were present in bodily form in the world to-day, he would utter the same truth on the banks of Niagara that he did on the shores of Galilee, but the truth would have a new application. It would strike out and hit the sins of this generation. It would meet the needs of this hour. That is what is meant by constancy without stagnation. Let Jesus himself tell it. "I am the vine, ye are the branches," said he. "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Abide—that is constancy. Fruitfulness—no stagnation there. Or look upon the river and the pool. The water abides in the river bed, never leaves the channel, but is ever moving. The water abides in the pool, and stays there, does not move, stagnates, becomes filthy, foul, the vile breeder of disease. River or pool—choose ye!

The second burning candle of the second candelabra is *security without immunity*. He

that dwelleth in the secret place shall abide under the shadow. That is, security of faith without immunity from faith's responsibilities and obligations. There is a type of religious experience that boasts security, and all unconsciously, perhaps, boasts immunity. It delights in its own exhilarating experience, its rapture and joy, but forgets its obligations in a sick and sorry world. Paul had a great experience, an experience he might not only have justly gloried in but selfishly rested upon, immune from further responsibility. His first question after that experience was, "Who art thou, Lord?" His second question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" One petition in Jesus' great prayer of Intercession stands out in bold relief from among all the others. "I pray not," said Jesus, "that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." The place of security is in the thick of the fight, in the very center of activity. Our religious preaching and thinking have had too much of this false note, that the Christian faith hedges one about with complacent immunity. What does Jesus say? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But he does not stop there. In the very same breath he says, "Take my yoke upon you."

The final burning candle is *refuge without isolation*. In the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty. That is refuge, but that is not isolation. On the walls of my home I have a picture of the ruins of an old monastery in the Philippine Islands. It stands a few miles out from Manila and I have visited it at least a half dozen times. It had a peculiar fascination for me; its location, on a sightly spot above the Pasig River; its broken walls, the most pretentious ruins I have ever seen. Enough is left so that one is able to piece together the whole story of the life of the monks who once dwelt there. Broad steps lead up to the church and monastery entrance. Within is a large courtyard; in that courtyard a well, and a clever arrangement for catching rain if the well failed; a huge cold cellar. Off the courtyard on two sides were the monks' living and social rooms. On the third side the spacious kitchen and dining room. On the fourth side the chapel. Directly back of the kitchen is the inclosed garden and farm. Connected with the chapel was a large mausoleum where they buried their dead. One could become a member of that order, take its vows, enter the doors of the monastery and never come out. All that he needed for life or death was held within the

four walls. And they called that refuge. That is not refuge, it is isolation. There is but one refuge, that is the cross. The cross stands, not, as we sometimes sing, "on a lonely hill far away," but it stands in the very center of life, in the heart of truth, at the crossroads of every busy, crowded day.

In this Gothic chapel for wounded souls we see the two three-branched burning candelabras, and over them the cross, while listening we hear the people sing—

> "In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time."

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the cross.

XV

THE POEM'S ANOMALY

Christ the Borrower

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.—*Matthew 8. 20.*

Count the cost! That is a good thing to do, always, to count the cost. A certain scribe, we read, came to Jesus from out of the throng who had been listening and said, with an enthusiasm and eagerness refreshing to contemplate, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus, looking at him, said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." In other words, count the cost! We hear nothing more of this scribe—evidently the cost was too great. "Yes, yes, I will follow Jesus," we cry, in some enthusiasm that sweeps over us. Do we mean it? Have we counted the cost? However, the exceeding glory of this sentence is that it is not a bid for sympathy, is not a play for pity —Jesus never did anything like that; rather, it is a plain statement of fact. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof"—yet the

Son of God had not a foot of ground to which he could give the name "home." "The cattle upon a thousand hills are God's," yet God's eternal Son had not the meanest beast that he could call his own. This is not without plan or purpose. There is a reason for it. The strange circumstance is worth our study. *Jesus lived on borrowed capital.*

Jesus was born in a *borrowed cradle.* Luke tells us about it with compelling simplicity and beauty: Mary "brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." The difference between the inn and the manger was not as great as one would at first suppose. It was not the radical difference between a Hotel Waldorf-Astoria and a garage. There was difference enough, but the essential point is that it was about as humble a place as one could well choose for a birthplace, and it was borrowed. About the same time there were two other births. The first was the birth of Augustus, child of fortune, with royal blood in his veins; welcomed by his family, hailed by friends, cradled in luxury. The second was the birth of Nero; son of opportunity, with the world at his feet, waited upon by a retinue of servants, his least wish a command. Yet his-

tory does not record that Christ was born midway between Augustus and Nero; but history causes the record to read: "Augustus was born sixty-five years before Christ, and Nero was born thirty-seven years after Christ." Books, biographies, encyclopædias tell us that the borrowed manger-cradle of Bethlehem is the central point of the world's history. It tells us that the important thing is not *where* one's cradle is but *where he goes* from that cradle. It does not matter that Washington was born in a cradle of wealth, and Lincoln in a cradle of poverty; it matters that Washington and Lincoln went from those cradles to the willing, sacrificial service of God and humanity. Jesus' manger-cradle enables him to respect and sympathize with every other cradle, wherever found. He stands by the side of the cradle of poverty, in the home where the rent is due, where medical and kindred expense must be paid on the installment plan, and says, "I am here; I am here to tell you of my love; I am here to say that this is not the end but the beginning; one may rise from manger to throne." He stands by the side of the cradle of plenty to say, "I am here; I am here to ask you to remember that there are other cradles; some of the warmth, affection and abundance of this cradle might well

be passed on to the cradles of need; I love them all; I love every cradle from Africa to America," says Jesus, who was cradled in a borrowed manger.

In the second place, Jesus preached from a *borrowed pulpit.* One of the satisfying things to a pastor is to have a church and pulpit of which he can say, "This is my church, this is my pulpit." It was in 1884 that George A. Gordon was installed as pastor of Old South Congregational Church, Boston. For forty-three years he ministered there, he built up the congregation, he put the stamp of his personality upon that pulpit. In a very real sense and with pardonable pride he was able to say, "This is my church, this is my pulpit." The atmosphere and practice of Methodism is hardly favorable to such incidents. Committed more or less enthusiastically—less rather than more in these recent years—to the itinerant system, our pulpits belong to the church at large rather than the individual minister. But I would not complain, for Jesus was never a settled pastor. He was never the rabbi of any one synagogue, nor the pastor of any one flock. All people were his people. When he wanted a pulpit he stopped in the Temple porch, with the people about him; or he paused by the wayside; or he borrowed a boat,

shoved it out a bit from the shore, stood in the boat and talked to his congregation on the shore. Jesus' borrowed pulpit makes him the universal preacher. He has a right to every pulpit. I have preached in other pulpits—Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Disciples, United Brethren, Episcopal, Jewish Synagogue—but these I have named are only a scant seven of the scores and hundreds of pulpits, from many of which I am barred, but Jesus has right to them all. He is even welcomed outside Christian pulpits. Ghandi, who preaches to India's teeming millions, takes Christ with him wherever he goes, freely acknowledging his indebtedness to his truth. China says to us, "We do not want your Western civilization; we are not sure that we want your Occidental Christianity, but we do want and need your Christ." Far above the pulpit of Saint Peter's or Saint Paul's or the Abbey, pulpits of power and pulpits of which one may well be proud, is Jesus' borrowed pulpit, the pulpit universal.

Third, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a *borrowed animal.* Here again the simplicity of the gospel account is its beauty. Jesus, drawing near Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday, sent two of his disciples to the little village of Bethpage, saying, "Ye shall find a colt tied;

. . . loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do you this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him." I have no doubt the colt was returned to his rightful owner, for he was only a borrowed animal. But upon this borrowed beast Jesus rode into Jerusalem with a dignity and authority unequaled by any earthly emperor. In February, 1918, General Allenby entered Jerusalem at the head of the Allied forces; in remembrance of the humble entrance of Jesus on a borrowed beast, Allenby refused to ride, but walked into the holy city. What is the significance of the borrowed beast? It is that Jesus still advances by means of borrowed agencies. He has no fleet of ships, yet the ships of the seven seas carry his messages and messengers to the ends of the earth. Jesus owns no railroad, but railroad corporations of our day are not wholly heartless; railroads do some perfectly splendid, some thoroughly Christian work. Jesus has no auto, but your auto may be a vehicle of mercy as well as of pleasure or business. Nothing is his own, yet everything should be his to command. The words, "The Lord hath need of this," are the magic words releasing every agency for his service.

In the fourth place Jesus used a *borrowed*

room. When he approached that most significant event in his life, when he was to lay before his disciples the power and meaning of his sacrifice, he needed a room in which he might be alone with those immediately responsible for the work of the church. He called Peter and John to him and said, "Make ready the Passover."

"Where?" they asked in amazement.

"Go into the city," said Jesus, "and there will meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him; follow him not simply to the doorstep, but follow him right into the house. Then say to that Goodman of the house" (I like this word Goodman; though it has quite the same meaning as our word "Mister"; there is a warmth and assurance about the word Goodman that is most appealing), "say to the Goodman of the house, 'The Master has sent us to ask you for your guest chamber, that he may use it for the Passover with his disciples.'"

There was no question, no hesitancy; at once the Goodman led them to his guest chamber and they made ready the Passover. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which more than any one act, binds all Christians together, "whate'er their name or sign," had its beginning in a borrowed room. This same

Jesus is still borrowing rooms. He asks every room in your house. Though he said, "In my Father's house are many rooms," yet he has need of every room, in every house, everywhere. The lower rooms belong to Christ. The vestibule entrance should be his. As soon as a stranger steps within your vestibule and passes into your living room he should be able to tell that Christ lives in that room. How is he to tell? By the books upon the shelves, by the papers and magazines on the table, by the pictures on the wall, by the conversations carried on there, by the language used, by the very air and atmosphere of the place—Oh, there is no difficulty in telling when one enters a house whether the rooms belong to Christ! The lower rooms he asks, but especially the upper room. The upper room is the secret place, the place of solitude, the place of quiet, the place of purpose and of prayer. A few weeks since when the women of Buffalo District asked the use of our Parish House for their annual day of prayer they said to me, "Can't we have the upper room?" So they went to the upper room. There is something about the upper room, in church or home, that typifies more nearly than any other the presence of Christ. Young married people, entering for the first time their new

home, will be assured of a happy and successful home if they say from the very outset, "The rooms of our home, every one of them, we have loaned to Christ." Christ asks every room of your life, young people. He wants the room where dwell your thoughts—the room called your brain. He asks the room where dwell your affections—your heart. He wants the rooms where dwell life's pleasures—your senses. If you let Christ borrow all your rooms, you will have no vain regrets such as the ancient preacher recorded when he said, rather lugubriously, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Remember your Creator, let Jesus into every room, and you will have pleasures to the end of your days, and then "at his right hand forevermore."

One more thing Jesus borrows—*a tomb*. He who had no place he could call his own in life, neither had he a place for his body to be laid when death claimed him. There is a charm and loveliness about the account of Joseph of Arimathæa, who loaned his new tomb for the body of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathæa—Arimathæa, a little town in the vicinity of Jerusalem—was a rich man, a wise man, for he was a

counselor, a member of the Sanhedrin, a man of standing in all that countryside. He was a devout man, secretly a disciple of Jesus before the crucifixion. After the crucifixion a bold and open disciple. Joseph it was who came to Pilate and asked Jesus' body. There is a fine loyalty in the account that says that he himself, with his own hands, took the body from the cross and laid it in his own new tomb, in which no man had ever yet been laid. Jesus buried in a borrowed tomb! But only for a few hours. These spots of earth where our loved ones are buried are dear to us; we love them, we visit them, we think about them, we place flowers upon them, we plant shrubs there—but they are only borrowed spots; borrowed spots for the body—the spirit has returned to God who gave it.

Now I am almost done, but there remains one thing more ere I lay down my pen.

Born in a borrowed cradle, preaching from a borrowed pulpit, riding into Jerusalem on a borrowed beast, inaugurating the Last Supper in a borrowed upper room, buried in a borrowed tomb—he climaxes it all by *borrowing our sins.* He had no sins of his own, so he borrowed humanity's sins. The apostle Peter—and who was in a better position to know whereof he spoke than the recreant yet re-

stored Peter?—said: "Christ also suffered for us." He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; . . . who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, . . . by whose stripes" we are "healed." Oh blessed hope of the world! Oh certain refuge for the storm-driven life! There is no other way than this, the way of the cross and the Borrowing Christ—

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursèd load:
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in his blood most precious,
Till not a stain remains."

The Borrowing Christ asks the *loan* of your life here, that he may *keep* you forever.

XVI

POEMS YOUNG AND OLD

The A C D of Youth and Age

He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.—*Malachi 4. 6.*

There is no particular virtue in the location of a verse—truth is truth wherever found—but one cannot help noting the fact that this verse is the last verse of the last book of the Old Testament.

It is worth mentioning that it is divinely appointed that the score which the Orchestra of the Old Testament plays as the final number, the music which echoes through the hall and lingers in one's ears as he leaves, is the sweet and haunting melody of the right relationship between parents and children. To-day it is popularly called the Youth Problem. It may be popularly called that, but it is wrong. It is no more a youth problem than it is an age problem. It might just as well be called the Age Problem, or the Parenthood Problem. The mistakes are not all on one side, neither are the virtues. However that may be, I am

certain that here in the last verse of this great collection of ancient literature called the Old Testament we have something that arouses and enlightens us.

There have been many contributions to the youth problem. All the way from Professor George Albert Coe's book, *What Ails Our Youth?* to Mr. Stanley High's publication, *The Revolt of Youth*, the subject has been amply discussed. I do not desire to add to the discussion. I only wish to write down in black and white some of the thoughts which I have. And in doing this I shall endeavor to keep before our eyes this verse which links the Old Testament and the New, this beautiful picture found at the very center of the Bible. My exact theme is The A C D of the Youth and Age Problem. Not the A B C. I shall omit the B and use the D instead. The A C D—that is, I wish to note the Attributes of age and youth, their Charms and their Duties.

First let us look at the *Attributes*. What is the outstanding attribute of age? We might name many, but we must confine ourselves to one. Looking at age, what is the one thing it possesses above all else? The answer is *experience*. Whatever else age may or may not have, it does have experience. Here is a man seventy-five years old. He has been a hard-

working man all his life. He has worked for a fair wage—but he has never been able to accumulate much. He has a little home, a small age pension, and, still able to work a little, he gets along fairly well. But one thing he has, one thing no one can take from him, and that is experience. Here is another man. He too is seventy-five years of age. This man, from the standpoint of material things, has been fortunate. He has large possessions. He has a beautiful home, with abundant service, large investments which yield him an income much too ample for his needs. But here is one thing he has entirely apart from his material wealth, namely, experience. He has just as much and not a bit more than this poor man. It is the attribute of each man, poor or rich, and of every man and woman of like length of days, for it is the one peculiar attribute of age —experience. Now, the chief value of experience is not its possession but its use. I have a friend who is the head of the Department of Entomology in the School of Agriculture of Cornell University. A letter from him not long since contained a circular announcing a convention of beekeepers to be held in the State of Ohio in the early fall. It is to be only a State convention, with a few visitors from adjoining States, yet they expect that

fully two thousand beekeepers will attend. I had no idea there were that number of beekeepers in all the world, let alone a single State. My friend is a recognized authority on bees; he was long in the employ of the United States government as one of their bee experts; for thirty years he has studied his subject. What if, with his standing and his wide experience in bee raising, he should now say: "I'm tired of this. I'm going to quit thinking about bees; I'm going into the grocery business." All his experience would stand for naught. The value of his experience is not its possession but its use. So it is with the experience of age. Age should use the experience it has. Not arrogantly, pharisaically, arbitrarily, sternly saying, "I know, because I've been through the mill." Rather, confidently, lovingly saying, "My experience has taught me this."

Now, if experience is the chief attribute of age, what is the main attribute of youth? The answer is *hope*. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." It might better be—hope springs eternal in the youthful breast. Youth has hope because life is before it. I know it is true that the man of sixty, if he has health and vigor, may still hope to do much. He may even make his noblest contribution to life after he is sixty. We cannot forget that Ben-

jamin Franklin was sent as minister to France when he was seventy years of age, and his best work for his country he did between his seventy-first and his seventy-eighth birthdays. The list is a long and glorious one of men and women who have done their best work, who have made their noblest contribution to humanity after they passed their sixtieth birthday, because they had hope. But think of the young man or young woman of twenty! The world, life before them—and hope! I am more than twenty, much more, but I am many years younger than Bishop William Burt, and I recall dear Bishop Burt saying to me more than once—he has said it so often that I may safely predict that the next time we meet he will say it again—with that marvelous smile of his lighting up his saintly countenance: "I envy you your opportunity, your years, and the age in which you live. I wish I were a young man again." So eager is he for the fray. In the language of the Book, let the heart of age be turned to youth, and let the heart of youth be turned to age! Let the experience of age speak lovingly to youth, and let the hope of youth speak encouragingly to age!

In the second place, let us note the *Charms* of age and youth. What is the chief charm of

age? I think it is SYMPATHY. Certainly, age that is sympathetic with youth and middle life is attractive and charming, while age that is unsympathetic, surly, forever passing quick, caustic and unjust judgment on youth and middle life, is anything but attractive. One of my preacher-friends in Kansas City recently wrote a Decalog for Age and Youth. William Stidger wrote:

Thou shalt not condemn and criticize, but thou shalt love and fraternize with youth.

Thou shalt not stifle and shackle, but thou shalt ennoble and inspire youth.

Thou shalt not denounce and deny, but thou shalt win and welcome youth.

Thou shalt not scold, but thou shalt stimulate youth.

Thou shalt not crush the soul of youth by ridiculing his ambition, by quenching his enthusiasms, by suppressing his energies, by sneering at his dreams simply because thou thyself hath passed the period of dreaming.

Thou shalt not attempt to bluff or bluster youth.

Thou shalt not assume that youth is ignorant.

Thou shalt not charge that youth is more wicked to-day than in other generations.

Thou shalt not speak negatives and negations at all hours to youth.

And, verily, thou shalt remember that all youth is not flaming youth.

The point of this New Decalog is that the chief charm of age in the eyes of youth, in the eyes of all, is sympathy. This does not mean that age shall not criticize youth, that age shall dismiss all derelictions of youth with

the nonchalant wave of the hand—"Oh, they're all right; they're young, they'll get over it." But when age passes judgment let it be with sympathy!

Now, what is the chief charm of youth? COURAGE. "Fools step in where angels fear to tread" might well be Youth steps in where angels fear to tread. Youth is courageous. Youth has physical courage. The wars of the world have been fought by young men. Think of the stream of men from all over our fair land who went and who were ready to go to France ten short years ago—a stream of young men. And when youth is rightly directed and gets a clear vision it is as courageous morally as physically. This moral courage of youth is ofttimes impatient with the slow and ponderous methods of age. Youth takes the attitude that if a thing should be done, why, let us go ahead and do it, slash the red tape, go right through to the righteous end. Take, for example, the question of the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. This is a question which age has debated for years and years, and is still debating. What shall we do with all our ecclesiastical machinery, what about our articles of belief, how shall we adjust the relations of the whites and blacks in the two

churches so that the sensitiveness of neither the North nor the South shall be offended? These and similar questions—important questions—have been debated lo, these many years, and we are still far from a final settlement. Behold, youth comes along, and five hundred of them in convention declare: "We have a great task to perform; that task can be performed better together than apart. We are already united in ideals and aims, let us be united in fact." Youth manifests the same moral courage toward the vital question of peace and war. They say, hundreds and thousands of them say, "War is wrong. We must rule it out of civilization; and we must begin by having peace in our own souls, by refusing to hate those of another color or tongue." Let the truth be fulfilled in these charms—let the sympathy in the heart of age be turned toward youth, and let the courage in the heart of youth be turned toward age!

In the A C D of the problem of age and youth the D stands for DUTIES. What is the outstanding duty of age toward youth? It is GUIDANCE. Guidance by *precept*. It is the privilege and duty of age to speak good precepts to youth. But let them be spoken in the right spirit. Age must not be forever finding fault with youth, telling youth how much bet-

ter the young people of their day were than they, because it isn't true. The United States Children's Bureau has recently put out some figures, after a survey of fourteen large cities—New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo included—in which they make the statement that, contrary to the general opinion, juvenile delinquency shows a slight decrease rather than increase between the years of 1915 and 1925. Statistics are by no means conclusive, nor do even favorable statistics belie the fact that we are still riding on a wave of lawlessness; but we have no right to make a blanket charge against youth. Precept without example is hypocrisy. Do most young people find their evening's entertainment away from home these days? The question might well be asked, How many grown people find their evening's entertainment away from home? What sort of an example do they set?

If guidance is the chief duty of age, what is the main duty of youth? The answer is OBLIGATION. Obedience is wrapped up in the word "obligation." Where youth does not learn to obey when the command is just, there is bound to be a sorry life to follow. Responsibility is contained in this word "obligation." Let no youth think that he can be entirely carefree; without responsibility he cannot build

a strong character. He must face responsibility and fulfill it. Respect is contained in this word "obligation." Respect for law, for knowledge, for age, for what others of other generations have wrought. Reverence is bound up in this word "obligation." Reverence for God, for the church, for sacred things. This is the supreme and the sublime duty of youth. Let the guidance of the heart of age be turned to youth, and let the obligation of the heart of youth be turned to age.

But there is more to this statement. It is a tragic or a glorious ending according to the way we take it. The prophet says, "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." We are fond of saying that the young people are the hope of the world. They are not. Neither are the older people. Together they are. Together they will curse this old world or they will bless it. Together, hand in hand, heart beating with heart, let youth and age go forward, toward the morning; dedicated to the quest of the Holiest Grail, wedded in common endeavor. Together let them stand before the throne of God, at the altar of life, at the foot of the cross, saying, "Here we are, thine to cancel the curse, thine to bring the blessing."

XVII

THE POEM'S CLIMAX

Praise, Peace, and a Program

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.—*Luke 2. 14.*

"I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old, familiar carols play."

So begins Longfellow's memory-awakening Christmas poem. Wistful, it is; sad and yet hopeful. The "old, familiar carols." And here is an old, familiar—carol—shall I say?—Hymn? Song? Music, at any rate. Luke records it. Would that it might have been recorded as we record voices to-day on the Victrola disc, reproducing, long after the voice has been silent, the rich, powerful tones of a Caruso! Do I wish that? Honestly, no. That would make the angel song too mechanical, and one simply cannot connect the angel song with mechanics. Besides, the disc is no proof of permanency. The record in wax has been tested less than fifty years—Luke's record has stood the test of nearly two thousand years. The disc may easily be broken, the vault in which it reposes subject to decay, fire, theft, and vandalism; the very civilization of

which the disc is a part may utterly vanish from the earth. Not so with the record of Luke—it cannot be broken, it is decay-proof, it is beyond the reach of vandalism, above the events which token the rise and fall of civilizations—

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,"

but the angel song of the first Christmas abides, safe at the center of the Book, in the heart of humanity, in the keeping of God. And yet we wish we might have heard it, that first Christmas song. How we would love to have it reproduced, just as it sounded over the Judæan hills long ago! Well, Luke does reproduce it for us. Dear, "beloved physician," as Paul styles Luke. He was more than a physician, he was a grammarian, he was an artist with words. Straightforward, honest, thrilling in its very simplicity is the language of Luke. Thus he writes of that first eventful Christmas morning—swept off his feet with the wonder of it, yet faithfully recording the facts: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." That is the greatest song that was ever sung—barring none. The token of Easter is a shout—The Lord is risen, the Lord is risen indeed. The token of Christmas is a song—Glory to God

in the highest! Three things are told us in this song as recorded by Luke. I will name them at the very outset. They are Praise, Peace and a Program.

First, Praise. To whom? To God. Glory to God. We can be grateful to the psalmist for this—he has taught humanity the art of praise to God. The synonym for "psalms" is "praise," the same number of letters, the same meaning—psalms, praise. "Praise God" is his exhortation. "I will praise God" is his registered vow. Praise is one of the valuable assets of life. A man reckons up his property—so much in bonds, so much in stocks, so much in real estate, so much in salary or wages—but does he take account of the spirit of praise, the most valuable possession of all? The spirit of praise to God will bring one more downright happiness and contentment than any other single possession. Glory to *God.* Did you ever know a potter to praise a vessel of his own making for its beauty and usefulness? Surely, praise is due, not to the clay, but to the potter. So praise is due God, the great Potter of our human vessel, body and soul. If we have not practiced praise, then let us begin this Christmas season. Do you recall the story of Billy Bray, that quaint Cornish preacher? He was a constant visitor among

the sick and dying. On one occasion he was sitting by the bedside of a Christian brother who had always been very reticent and afraid to confess joyously his faith in Christ. Turning to Billy, whose beaming face and sunny words had done much to produce this joy, he said, "Oh, Mr. Bray, I am so happy that if I had the power I would shout 'Glory!'"

"Ah, mon," said Billy, "what a pity thee didn't shout 'Glory' when thee hadst the power."

Yes, glory to God. How? In the highest. The highest praise is due the highest creature. Again we are indebted to the psalmist, for he tells us about the praise that is highest. He says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." His final word as put down in the one hundred and fiftieth Psalm is a request to praise with highest praise: "Praise him with the sound of the trumpet," he says. "Praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Let no apology be offered for the use of any instrument in the sanctuary, only so it be

used in praise of God. The highest praise! As Edward Perronet said, almost with his dying breath:

> "Glory to God in the height of his divinity.
> Glory to God in the depth of his humanity.
> Glory to God in his all-sufficiency.
> Glory to God in the highest."

Glory to God in the highest. The highest glory to the highest God—for what? For the birth of a little Child. The angel chorus is assembled, the only occasion in all the history of the world that their song has been heard on earth; shepherds are roused from their slumber and hurried away to the town; wise men, who should have had sufficient to take up their thought and attention, gladly surrender days, and for all we know, weeks, to inquire into this event. The stars in their courses are halted, the universe is at a standstill—all for what? For the birth of a little Child. It must have been a great event. It *is* a great event when a child is born into a home. No greater event ever takes place. The greatest event in a home is not marriage. When the child of your heart reaches maturity and is claimed in love and marriage—that is not the greatest event. The building of a house, after planning and saving, is not the greatest event. The entertainment of some prominent person

at your table is not the greatest event. Death is not the greatest event in the home. Death is simply a parting word until in some fairer clime you say, "Good morning." The greatest event in the home is the birth of a little child. Henceforward the home is different, entirely different; it is a home. The greatest event in the history of the universe is not the creation, is not the setting of the stars in their orbits, nor the eternal law of growth, seedtime and harvest. The greatest event in the universe is the birth of a little child—*the* little Child. The pivotal point in all history is Bethlehem, the first morning of the year 1. Everything is B. C. or A. D., before that event or after that event, before the birth of Christ or after the birth of Christ. Glory to God in the highest—for the birth of a little Child. So much for the praise. Now, the second message of this Christmas verse, namely:

Peace. Peace on earth. I take it that there is peace in heaven and that the ideal is to bring peace on earth. And that the angels came from heaven, singing their song, and that Christ came as a little child, to bring peace. Speaking of Peace, at once we think of peace among the nations. Looking abroad, seeing the strife among the nations, the millions spent for war and not one penny for

peace, we ask: What now about that angel song? Where is that promised peace? Be not discouraged.

"For lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing."

In Heidelberg, Germany, there is a large globe map of the world. It stands about four feet high. On that map the United States is not shown. At once some one says: "Ah, the Germans are still teaching their children hate and revenge, that the United States is so puny a nation that it might as well not exist; no wonder the peace of the world is so far off." No, it is not that. That globe map was made before America was discovered. They did not know America existed when that map was made. That is one difficulty when it comes to peace among the nations—ignorance. When we get to know each other better, knowing that we are all human, all actuated by the same impulses, and all of us love our homes and little children, then there will be peace among the nations. Listening to this angel song of Peace we think of peace in industry.

There can be no real happiness and contentment when men are not at peace in their work. The peace that Christ brings is also a peace of the individual heart. "To have," as Paul says, "a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men," is the crowning experience of the human heart; this gives a peace which nothing else can give, and which none can take away. This is the bequest which Jesus makes to the individual life that trusts him. Hear him as he says, and I emphasize as it is perfectly correct to emphasize, the personal pronoun—"*Peace* I leave with *you*, my *peace* I give unto *you;* not as the world giveth, give I unto *you*. Let not *your* heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

This Christmas text discloses a third truth, namely, a Program. Praise, Peace and a Program. The Program—*Good will among men*. Without following that program praise is a mockery and peace is impossible. Now, there are different renderings of this verse. One of them is, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Another rendering is, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will." Still another rendering is, "Peace among men whom God favors." To my mind the best rendering of all is the one I have

been quoting from Luke, the old Authorized Version, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Toward men. It is an attitude, a positive program of conduct. During the summer in England we contemplated visiting France. Friends came from France to England, and learning of our intention, tried to dissuade us. They said: "You will have a decidedly unpleasant time in France. Americans and Britishers are in disrepute there these days. They don't like the way their franc is dropping, while the English pound note and American money retain their value, and they take their revenge in insults to American and English visitors. You better not go." We listened to their advice, then went. From the moment we stepped on French soil until we left we found on every hand, on the part of all sorts of people, nothing but courtesy, kindness, and friendliness. It proved what I have always believed—Good will begets good will. If one goes in the spirit of good will, good will will come back to him. We receive what we give out. Bread cast upon the waters will surely return. Good will *toward* men, it is a positive program of action. Florence Coombe, in her book *Islands of Enchantment*, tells of a non-Christian village, now Christian. A great feast was in progress,

when into the midst of that native feast there walked the chief of the whole district with his war-club in his hand. He went straight up to the giver of the feast, handed him the war-club with the request that it be chopped up and distributed among the other chiefs as a declaration of peace and good will. We would get along a great deal better, not only among the nations, but in the home, in our various societies, in business and in many a personal relationship if we would take our war-clubs, cut them up and distribute or burn the pieces as evidence of our program of conduct. I cannot refrain from giving one other illustration, for if Christmas does not produce good will it is all in vain. This illustration is not from a non-Christian village but from one of the greatest of modern cities. A while ago the cornerstone of the Graham Taylor Memorial Hall was laid in Chicago. Jews, Roman Catholics, Protestants were there. William E. Dever, the Roman Catholic Mayor, who had canceled every other engagement on account of sickness, left his sick-bed that he might stand by the side of Julius Rosenwald and Graham Taylor in that ceremony. The reason for it all? Thirty-three years ago Graham Taylor assumed the chair of Christian Sociology in Chicago Theological Seminary.

Thereupon he with his family took up their residence in the heart of the seventeenth ward, where the problems of poverty, immigration, industrial conflicts, and congested housing were most acute. There he put the gospel to the test. There the gospel has stood the test. And this Hall rises a witness in stone to the spirit of thirty-three years of loving labor and good will. On that occasion, turning to the faculty of the seminary, he closed his remarkable address with this sentence: "What you can't pray out and preach in, you can live out and love in." So stands Christmas, not merely a time of rapturous praise, and innocuous peace, but the time of the inauguration of an aggressive program of good will.

Glory in heaven.
Peace on earth.
Good will toward men.

XVIII

THE POEM'S GOAL

I Set the Lord Always Before Me

I have set the Lord always before me.—*Psalm 16. 8.*

The sixteenth is called a "Golden Psalm." That is, certain of the psalms stand out as psalms of the Psalms; this is one of them, a Golden Psalm. It begins with tears and ends with laughter; it opens with fear and closes with faith. "Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust," is the opening cry. "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore," is the closing confident shout. While at the heart of the psalm is the lofty resolve, "I have set the Lord always before me." This is what I call a sufficient daily guide—the Lord always before me. Walking, Reading, Thinking, Talking, Working—the Lord always before me. These five words compass the activities of life, of every day. Let us apply the psalmist's resolve to them and see where it leads us.

First, *Walking*. As I walk through life I will set the Lord always before me. One can-

not go astray who sets the Lord before him as he starts out on a journey, long or short. I recall a son who started out on a long walk. He talked with his father before he left home; his father gave him some money for his journey and gave him also his blessing. His journey took him a long way from home, and a still longer distance from the habits and teachings of his home. He began spending his money, not righteously but riotously; in the picturesque language of his older brother, he "devoured his living with harlots." He spent and spent until there was nothing left to spend; he was reduced to rags, husks, and remorse. Needless to say, when he started on that walk from the home of his youth he did not set the Lord before him, for the Lord does not lead in the way of husks, harlots, and remorse. Young people leave home; they should leave home; they cannot be kept forever beneath the old roof tree. They must develop their own character; they must have their own chance at life; we do young people no kindness when we shelter and protect them beyond a certain age. I know the fear in the hearts of parents about sending their boys and girls away to school during their tenderer years; they feel that many of the schools of our day are not exactly safe for the moral and

spiritual life of their young people. But what are we to do? We cannot keep our boys and girls at home. I have the feeling that if we send our young people away with the Lord before them, their steps will be guided aright. All the safeguards of home, all the rules and regulations of the best school are as nothing compared with the experience and conviction within the young man's own heart—I have set the Lord before me; I will follow where he leads. Not only is the path we walk with the Lord before us the path of righteousness, it is also the path of safety. One need not fear to go anywhere if he is sure the Lord is leading. "Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." One who sets the Lord always before him in his walking will find that he is not only kept *from* things but is led *to* things; he will not only be kept from sin and danger, he will be led into ways of kindness, purity, and truth. One of the inspiring little books on my shelves is entitled *Footsteps in a Parish.* It is the fascinating account of a pastor, Maltbie D. Babcock, of fragrant memory, who set the Lord always before him in his daily walk, whose pathway led everywhere over the city of Baltimore, into ways of kindness, service

and love in the Master's name. In all your ways acknowledge him; walking, set the Lord ever before you.

Our days are made up, not only of Walking, but of Reading. *Reading*, I will set the Lord always before me. We are great readers. I suppose the American people are the greatest readers in the world. One of the amazing things of these days is the capacity of the public for papers, magazines, and books. Every big daily, in quantity at least, is a book in itself. Books are being turned off the printing press in unbelievable numbers. I have read of a review-editor who had on his desk six hundred books awaiting review. All of them had come out within a month. I have also heard of a publisher who has begun to talk, for his publishing house, a "book a day," as a not impossible goal of production. We are turning out books as we do automobiles, so many per hour. Now in all this amazing capacity for reading there must be something to guide and direct. Here it is—"I set the Lord always before me." There are at least three reasons why people read. The first reason is excitement. Newspaper reading is largely for excitement. True, we are after the news of the day, but the news is so colored, so enmeshed in exciting details and asides that the

reading of the newspaper is pursued largely along the line of excitement. Then we read also for entertainment. The magazines and many books prosper because they furnish entertainment. There is a third reason for reading, namely, nourishment. We read to feed the mind. Whether we read for excitement, entertainment or nourishment, or all three, it is going to make a tremendous difference in our reading, in what we read and in our estimate of what we read if we keep the Lord always before us. Reading in the newspaper of wars and rumors of wars, of crime and nasty personal gossip, with the Lord always before us we are going to say, "All life is not like that; I know, for I see the Lord." All that we read anywhere will be tried in the crucible, "I have set the Lord always before me."

There is a third daily process, namely, Thinking. *Thinking*, I set the Lord always before me. That is going to make a difference in *what* we think. In John's picture of the new heaven and the new earth he says that "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." It is that way with our thinking—if the Lord is ever before us, there shall in no wise enter our thinking anything that defileth, neither whatsoever work-

eth abomination or maketh a lie. Paul puts it differently, but quite as effectively as John. Paul says, "Brethren"; I do not know why he limited it to the men, he should have added, "Sisters," for women are capable of the noblest thought quite as much as men. He did include them, for he spoke generically—"Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The *if* here is rhetorical, for there is virtue and there is praise in these things. The essential thing, however, is "Think on these things." Setting the Lord always before us is going to help—it is going to compel us to think on these things. At the end of an old year and the beginning of a new, David Livingstone wrote in his diary these words: "We now end 1866. It has not been so fruitful or useful as I intended. Will try to do better in 1867, and be better, more gentle and loving; and may the Almighty, to whom I commit my way, bring my desires to pass and prosper me! Let all the sins of '66 be blotted out for Jesus' sake." For all the thinking of the new year he was determined to set the Lord before him.

A fourth function is daily used—Talking. *Talking*, I set the Lord always before me. When you are out in different groups put down in your mind the topics of conversation. At the club luncheon, in the lodge room, about the tea table, at the dinner party, in the shop—wherever men or women gather to talk, what do they talk about? How much of their conversation rises to the test—I set the Lord always before me! What a medium of exchange is conversation! For business, pleasure, instruction, and friendliness talking is the mightiest medium of all. I can vision what the result would be if in all our talking we set the Lord always before us. In conversation it would mean constructive talk. Pleasant, delightful, humorous, but not harmful, it would be constructive. So much of our friendly conversation is destructive; we indulge too much in personalities and not enough in principles. We forget the apostle's warning—"The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" The tongue may do great good or great harm in conversation. We are not all good conversationalists, but we may all be conversationalists of good. In business talk setting the Lord always before us would mean honest talk, would mean care in making prom-

ises and loyalty in keeping them. In political talk keeping the Lord ever before us would mean less talk; would mean talk directed to the subject rather than to the galleries. In preaching keeping the Lord ever before us would result in more fearless talk. I can envision the whole realm of speech revolutionized by the resolve, "Talking, I set the Lord before me."

There is one final function, Working. *Working,* I will set the Lord always before me. We are working in a world of limitless possibilities mechanically. We know not what a day may bring forth. Not long since we celebrated here in Buffalo the Centennial of the opening of the Erie Canal. In the afternoon a small but significant parade was held; in the evening there was a banquet at the hotel. At the banquet moving pictures were shown of the parade of the afternoon—those films having been developed in the Eastman studios in Rochester. At the conclusion of the first speech of the evening a telegram came from a woman in Toledo, a granddaughter of one of the men who worked on the canal, saying she had heard the first speech over the radio and had enjoyed it. A little later in the evening two young men stood up with a cask of water. They had left Buffalo in the morning with their

cask filled with water from Lake Erie, flown to New York, emptied the water into the Atlantic Ocean, filled the cask with Atlantic water; had flown back to Buffalo to mingle the ocean waters with the lake, and were present at the banquet the same evening. There, in a single evening, were three examples of marvelous mechanical achievement. Greater things are yet to happen. In the face of such possibilities and prophecies in the working world we need supremely one thing to hold us steady —we need to keep the Lord always before us. For these great achievements will be dedicated either to God or the devil; they will lead us up or down.

Take this golden verse from this Golden Psalm as your sufficient daily guide. Walking, Reading, Thinking, Talking, Working—let the Lord guide you. Let Christ play upon you. Paganini could play more divinely upon a cheap fiddle than any amateur on a Cremona. And the Master can make sweet music of your life whatever your abilities. Give yourself wholly to God. Set the Lord *always* before you.

Date Due

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AUTHOR

God the greatest poet, man His
TITLE greatest poem.

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